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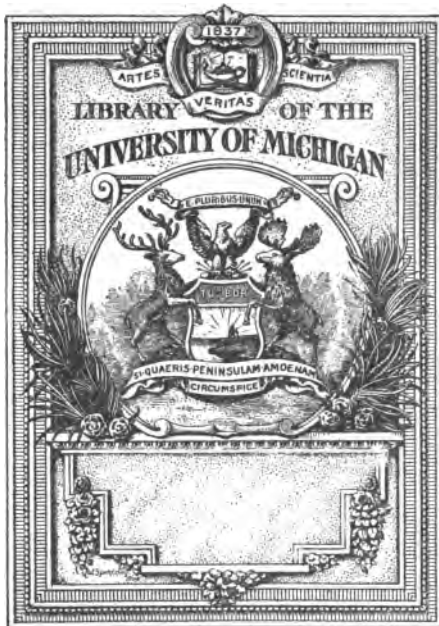
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STRAFFORD

Robert Browning



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STRAFFORD:

A TRAGEDY.

BY ROBERT BROWNING.

WITH NOTES AND PREFACE BY

EMILY H. HICKEY,

AUTHOR OF "A SCULPTOR, AND OTHER POEMS."

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

It was in 1835 that Mr. Browning was introduced to Macready the tragedian, and it was out of this acquaintance that the production of "Strafford" came. Macready saw in "Paracelsus" the work of a true tragic poet, and suggested that Browning should write a play for him. Macready wrote in his journal in 1836: "Browning said that I had *bit him* by my performance of *Othello*, and I told him I hoped I should make the blood come. It would, indeed, be some recompense for the miseries, the humiliations, the heart-sickening disgusts which I have endured in my profession if, by its exercise I had awakened a spirit of poetry whose influence would elevate, ennoble, and adorn our degraded drama. May it be!"

A little later, Macready said to Mr. Browning, "Write a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America!" Mr. Browning replied, "Shall it be historical and English? What do you say to a drama on Strafford?"

In March, 1837, the play was put in rehearsal, and produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 1st of May. To quote Mr. Edmund Gosse's account in "The Century" for Dec., 1881, from which I have taken the above details:—

"It is time now to deny a statement that has been repeated *ad nauseam* in every notice that professes to give an account of Mr. Browning's career. Whatever is said or not said, it is always remarked that his plays have 'failed'

9-27-32 M. J. Oscar.

on the stage. In point of fact, the three plays which he has brought out have all succeeded, and have owed it to fortuitous circumstances that their tenure on the boards has been comparatively short. 'Strafford' was produced when the finances of Covent Garden Theatre were at their lowest ebb, and nothing was done to give dignity or splendour to the performance. 'Not a rag for the new tragedy,' said Mr. Osbaldiston. The *King* was taken by Mr. Dale, who was stone-deaf, and who acted so badly that, as one of the critics said, it was a pity that the pit did not rise as one man and push him off the stage. All sorts of alterations were made in the text; where the poet spoke of 'grave grey eyes,' the manager corrected it in rehearsal to 'black eyes.' But at last Macready appeared, in the second scene of the second act, in more than his wonted majesty, crossing and recrossing the stage like one of Vandyke's courtly personages come to life again, and Miss Helen Faucit threw such tenderness and passion into the part of *Lady Carlisle* as surpassed all that she had previously displayed of histrionic power. Under these circumstances, and in spite of the dull acting of Vandenhoff, who played *Pym* without any care or interest, the play was well received on the first night, and on the second night was applauded with enthusiasm by a crowded house. There was every expectation that the tragedy would have no less favourable a 'run' than 'Ion' had enjoyed, but after five nights, Vandenhoff suddenly withdrew, and though Elton volunteered to take his place, the financial condition of the theatre, in spite of the undiminished popularity of the piece, put an end to its representation."

When the play was rehearsing, Mr. Browning gave Macready a *lilt* which he had composed for the children's song in Act V. His object was just to give the children a thing children would croon; but the two little professed singers, Master and Miss Walker, preferred something that should exhibit their powers more effectually, and a regular *song*

was substituted, scarcely, it will be thought, to the improvement of the play. By kind permission I print the original music.

Andante.



O bell' an-dare, Per barca in mare, Ver-so la se-ra, Di prima-

slentando e diminuendo.



ve - ra, O bell' an-da - re, O bell' an-da - - re.

The text of this edition has been revised by Mr. Browning. There are a good many changes in the punctuation, and a few verbal alterations. By a printer's error, unfortunately not discovered in time, a comma at the end of line 54, Act I., Scene 1, has been replaced by a period.

I am privileged to print a letter in which Lady Martin most kindly complies with my request that she should write a few lines on the character of Lady Carlisle, which she so beautifully rendered when the play was first produced:—

“ You ask me to write a few words about the character of Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle, as drawn by Mr. Browning in his play of ‘Strafford.’ That it is purely imaginary, he has told us himself in his preface. It is, therefore, not to be looked at in relation to any record of what the real Lady Carlisle was. It is drawn so firmly and clearly, that I feel it almost a wrong to my friend, Mr. Browning, to attempt to put my own idea of it into such words as one unaccustomed, like myself, to write on such things, can command. All I can say is, that I think Mr. Browning set himself a very difficult task in drawing a woman, full of love and devotion to a

man who, while he could not help being grateful for such devotion to his interests, and attracted by her charms as a woman, yet was so engrossed by personal and public interests, and the conflict with political adversaries, that he gives little or no sign of a reciprocal affection. There was great danger in working out this idea, and placing Lady Carlisle at a disadvantage;—for little sympathy is shown for a woman who shows her love, and meets only the coldest return. But over this difficulty the poet has, I think, triumphed. Among the other characters, of whom so many are selfish, headstrong, weak, or wayward, she seems to me to stand out in striking colours, such are the clearness of her perceptions, the fearlessness of her courage, the depth and nobleness of her love.

“I was a mere girl, and a novice on the stage, when the play was produced—but I remember well what struck me as the true note of Lady Carlisle’s character, and how difficult I felt the task of trying to give it expression. But the soul of nobleness which shines throughout all her words and acts, helped me in a great measure through my anxious ordeal.”

The historical Lady Carlisle was the daughter of the ninth Earl of Northumberland. In 1639, she had been for three years a widow. Her husband was James, Lord Hay, created successively Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle.

For a sketch of this strange woman, see Lodge’s “Portraits of Illustrious Personages,” &c., vol. v., in Bohn’s Library. Sir Tobie Matthews’ “character of the most excellent Lady, Lucy, Countess of Carlisle,” prefixed to a collection of letters, which Donne edited in 1660, is of sufficient interest to repay a careful perusal. Lodge has an engraving of her portrait by Vandyke. There is a younger portrait of her along with her sister, Dorothy, Countess of Leicester, at Bilton, near Rugby, a relic of the days when Addison lived there.

Waller’s *Saccharissa* was her niece.

In annotating this play I have had before me the probable needs of students and the possible needs of teachers. Some time ago, when speaking of this play as a subject for study, a lady said to me, "How can a *modern work* be studied? What is there to say about it?" This remark must have originated in a feeling that etymology and verbal points in general are the things to be considered in teaching English literature, and that where there is little to do in the way of hunting up obsolete words there is little to do in any way. It seems to me that "Strafford," offering much to the mere reader, offers greatly more to the student, and that the hours spent over it will not be regretted. I have tried to give help, as far as possible, by *suggestion*, and have therefore frequently used the form of questions, instead of merely appending notes. It has appeared to me that the special beauty of certain passages should not be "sign-posted," but that the poet should be left to speak for himself, as far as an annotated edition is concerned.

I would suggest that the play should be read through, twice, if possible, before any use be made of the notes, and that the student should keep steadily in mind the necessity of considering the play *as a whole*.

I shall take it as a kindness if any suggestions be sent to me, with a view to making a second edition, should the work be fortunate enough to reach one, more helpful than the first.

I wish to express my very warm thanks to Mr. Browning for his readily given permission to issue this edition of "Strafford"; for his explanation of three or four passages—I being specially indebted to him for most of the note on v. 2, 40; and for his revision of the text.

I have also to thank Dr. Abbott for some good hints, of which I have duly availed myself. I owe much gratitude to Professor Hales for his careful reading of my notes, and for numerous valuable suggestions, nearly all of which I have endeavoured to carry out.

Professor Gardiner knows, I hope, how much I feel indebted to him, not only for the writing of the Introduction, but for most kind help in the arrangement of the historical notes.

E. H. H.

LONDON, *March*, 1884.

INTRODUCTION.

THE reader of a play which is founded on the facts of history may reasonably wish to know how far the author has allowed himself to be bound by his knowledge of the actual course of events, and whether, if he has departed from it, it is possible to trace any principle in the variance. The present introduction is intended to give an answer to such a demand.

When, at the age of twenty-five, Mr. Browning wrote "Strafford," Mr. Forster's life of that statesman had just been published. There was an intimate friendship between the poet and the biographer, and Mr. Browning thus found the materials which he needed brought easily within his reach.

In a passage which rises far above Mr. Forster's ordinary level, the true theory of the identity of Strafford's life is set forth. ("British Statesmen," ii. 228):—

"In one word, what it is desired to impress upon the reader, before the delineation of Wentworth in his after-years, is this—that he was consistent to himself throughout. I have always considered that much good wrath is thrown away upon what is usually called 'apostasy.' In the majority of cases if the circumstances are thoroughly examined it will be found that there has been 'no such thing.' The position on which the acute Roman thought fit to base his whole theory of *Æsthetics*—

*" ' Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undeque collatis membris, ut turpiter atram
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici ? ' &c.*

—is of far wider application than to the exigencies of an art of poetry; and those who carry their researches into the moral nature of mankind, cannot do better than impress upon their minds, at the outset, that in the regions they explore, they are to expect no monsters, no essentially discordant termination to any ‘*mulier formosa superne.*’

* * * * *

“Against all such conclusions I earnestly protest in the case of the remarkable personage whose ill-fated career we are now retracing. Let him be judged sternly, but in no unphilosophic spirit. In turning from the bright band of patriot brothers to the solitary Strafford—‘a star which dwelt apart,’ we have to contemplate no extinguished splendour, razed and blotted from the book of life. Lustrous, indeed, as was the gathering of the lights in the political heaven of this great time, even that radiant cluster might have exulted in the accession of the ‘comet beautiful and fierce,’ which tarried awhile within its limits ere it ‘dashed athwart with train of flame.’ But it was governed by other laws than were owned by its golden associates, and—impelled by a contrary, yet no less irresistible force, than that which restrained them within their eternal orbits—it left them, never to ‘float into that azure heaven again.’”

Partly from want of sympathy with statesmen of Strafford’s type, and partly from the lack of material which has since come to light, Mr. Forster did not succeed in constructing a biography which answered to the expectations raised in these sentences. He enabled us to see the zeal and energy of his hero, and he showed that the result was the establishment of a tyranny. To exhibit Strafford believing that he was establishing a reign of justice, and that he was even defending the English constitution against its assailants, was beyond his range.

Is it too hazardous a conjecture to suppose that Mr. Browning was impelled to write “Strafford,” not merely

by his admiration for the man, but also from some desire to give a portraiture of him which would have the completeness of an imaginative conception? Whether it was so or not, there can be no doubt that the task which he undertook was one of extraordinary difficulty. The main interest of Strafford's career is political, and to write a political play

“Non dī, non homines, non concessere columnæ.”

The interests of politics is mainly indirect. Strafford is impeached, not merely because he is hated, or because he has done evil things, but because he is expected to do more evil things, and because if he is not punished other people at some future time will not be easily deterred from doing other evil things. Such possibilities of future evil, which the historian is bound to consider, are, however, essentially undramatic. The poet can at most only avail himself of them as a background for the scenes in which the characters or the passions of his personages are developed. Still less can he bring upon the stage personages who discuss the bearing and meaning of Acts of Parliament, as Pym and Strafford did in real life.

We may be sure, therefore, that it was not by accident that Mr. Browning in writing this play, decisively abandoned all attempt to be historically accurate. Only here and there does anything in the course of the drama take place as it could have taken place at the actual Court of Charles I. Not merely are there frequent minor inaccuracies, but the very roots of the situation are untrue to fact. The real Strafford was far from opposing the war with the Scots at the time when the Short Parliament was summoned. Pym never had such a friendship for Strafford as he is represented as having, and to anyone who knows anything of the habits of Charles, the idea of Pym or his friends entering into colloquies with Strafford, and even bursting in unannounced into Charles's presence, is, from the historical point of view, simply ludicrous.

So completely does the drama proceed irrespectively of historical truth, that the critic may dispense with the thankless task of pointing out discrepancies, where the writer plainly meant that there should be discrepancies. He will be better employed in asking what ends those discrepancies were intended to serve, and whether the neglect of truth of fact has resulted in the higher truth of character.

There is not much difficulty in answering the first question. From the beginning to the end of the play the personal relations between the actors are exaggerated at the expense of the political. To make that dramatic which would otherwise not be dramatic, Mr. Browning has been utterly regardless even of historical probability. Whatever personal feeling may have entwined itself in the political attachment between Strafford and Charles, is strengthened till it becomes the very basis of Strafford's life, and the keynote of his character. Having thus brought out the moral qualities of his hero, it remained for Mr. Browning to impress his readers with Strafford's intellectual greatness. The historian who tries to do that will have much to say on his constitutional views and his Irish government, but a dramatist who tried to follow in such a path would only make himself ridiculous. Mr. Browning understood the force of the remark of the Greek philosopher that Homer makes us realize Helen's beauty most, by speaking of the impression which it made upon the old men who looked on her. Mr. Browning brings out Strafford's greatness by showing the impression which he made on Pym and Lady Carlisle.

Mr. Browning took a hint from the old story which is without any satisfactory evidence, and which is indirectly contradicted by all the evidence which has reached us, that Pym and Strafford were once intimate friends. In carrying on Pym's feeling of admiration for Charles's minister to the days of the Short, and even of the Long Parlia-

ment, the dramatist has filled his play with scenes which are more hopelessly impossible than anything else in it ; but they all conduce to his main object, the creation of the impression about Strafford which he wished to convey. He pursues the same object in dealing with Lady Carlisle. What he needs is her admiration of Strafford, not Strafford's admiration of her. He takes care to show that she was not, as vulgar rumour supposed, Strafford's mistress. The impression of Strafford's greatness is brought more completely home to the spectator or the reader, because of the effect which it produces upon one who has given her heart without return. X

Having thus noted the means employed in creating the impression desired, we have still to ask, how far the impression is a correct one. On this point each reader must judge for himself. For myself, I can only say that, every time that I read the play, I feel more certain that Mr. Browning has seized the real Strafford, the man of critical brain, of rapid decision, and tender heart, who strove for the good of his nation without sympathy for the generation in which he lived. Charles too, with his faults perhaps exaggerated, is nevertheless the real Charles. Of Lady Carlisle we know too little to speak with anything like certainty, but, in spite of Mr. Browning's statement that his character of her is purely imaginary, there is a wonderful parallelism between the Lady Carlisle of the play and the less noble Lady Carlisle which history conjectures rather than describes. There is the same tendency to fix the heart upon the truly great man, and to labour for him without the requital of human affection, though in the play no part is played by that vanity which seems to have been the main motive with the real personage.

On the other hand Pym is the most unsatisfactory, from a historical point of view, of the leading personages. It was perhaps necessary for dramatic purposes that he should appear to be larger-hearted than he was, but it imparts an

unreality to his character. It must be remembered, however, that the aim of the dramatist was to place Strafford before the eyes of men, not to produce an exact representation of the statesmen of the Long Parliament.

S. R. G.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF STRAFFORD.

I HAD for some time been engaged in a Poem of a very different nature, when induced to make the present attempt; and am not without apprehension that my eagerness to freshen a jaded mind by diverting it to the healthy natures of a grand epoch, may have operated unfavourably on the represented play, which is one of Action in Character, rather than Character in Action. To remedy this, in some degree, considerable curtailment will be necessary, and, in a few instances, the supplying details not required, I suppose, by the mere reader. While a trifling success would much gratify, failure will not wholly discourage me from another effort: experience is to come; and earnest endeavour may yet remove many disadvantages.

The portraits are, I think, faithful; and I am exceedingly fortunate in being able, in proof of this, to refer to the subtle and eloquent exposition of the characters of Eliot and Strafford, in the Lives of Eminent British Statesmen, now in the course of publication in Lardner's Cyclopædia, by a writer¹ whom I am proud to call my friend; and whose biographies of Hampden, Pym, and Vane, will, I am sure, fitly illustrate the present year—the Second Centenary of the Trial concerning Ship-Money. My Carlisle, however, is purely imaginary: I at first sketched her

¹ John Forster.

singular likeness roughly in, as suggested by Matthews and the memoir-writers—but it was too artificial, and the substituted outline is exclusively from Voiture and Waller.

The Italian boat-song in the last scene is from Redi's "Bacco," long since naturalized in the joyous and delicate version of Leigh Hunt.

PERSONS.

CHARLES I.

Earl of HOLLAND.

Lord SAVILE.

Sir HENRY VANE.

WENTWORTH, Viscount WENTWORTH, Earl of
STRAFFORD.

JOHN PYM.

JOHN HAMPDEN.

The younger VANE.

DENZIL HOLLIS.

BENJAMIN RUDYARD.

NATHANIEL FIENNES.

Earl of LOUDON.

MAXWELL, Usher of the Black Rod.

BALFOUR, Constable of the Tower.

A Puritan.

Queen HENRIETTA.

LUCY PERCY, Countess of CARLISLE.

Presbyterians, Scots Commissioners, Adherents of Strafford,
Secretaries, Officers of the Court, &c. Two of Strafford's Children.



STRAFFORD.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A House near Whitehall.* HAMPDEN, HOLLIS, the younger VANE, RUDYARD, FIENNES and many of the Presbyterian Party: LOUDON and other Scots Commissioners.

Vane. I say, if he be here—

Rud. (And he is here!)—

Hol. For England's sake let every man be still
Nor speak of him, so much as say his name,
Till Pym rejoin us! Rudyard! Henry Vane!
One rash conclusion may decide our course 5
And with it England's fate—think—England's fate!
Hampden, for England's sake they should be still!

Vane. You say so, Hollis? Well, I must be still.
It is indeed too bitter that one man,
Any one man's mere presence, should suspend 10
England's combined endeavour: little need
To name him!

Rud. For you are his brother, Hollis!

Hamp. Shame on you, Rudyard! time to tell him that,
When he forgets the Mother of us all.

Rud. Do I forget her?

Hamp. You talk idle hate 15
Against her foe: is that so strange a thing?
Is hating Wentworth all the help she needs?

A Puritan. The Philistine strode, cursing as he went:
But David—five smooth pebbles from the brook
Within his scrip . . .

Rud. Be you as still as David! 20

Fien. Here's Rudyard not ashamed to wag a tongue
Stiff with ten years' disuse of Parliaments;
Why, when the last sat, Wentworth sat with us!

Rud. Let's hope for news of them now he returns—
He that was safe in Ireland, as we thought! 25
—But I'll abide Pym's coming.

Vane. Now, by Heaven,
They may be cool who can, silent who will—
Some have a gift that way! Wentworth is here,
Here, and the King's safe closeted with him
Ere this. And when I think on all that's past 30
Since that man left us; how his single arm
Rolled the advancing good of England back
And set the woeful past up in its place,
Exalting Dagon where the Ark should be,—
How that man has made firm the fickle King 35
(Hampden, I will speak out!)—in aught he feared
To venture on before; taught tyranny
Her dismal trade, the use of all her tools,
To ply the scourge yet screw the gag so close
That strangled agony bleeds mute to death— 40
How he turns Ireland to a private stage
For training infant villainies, new ways
Of wringing treasure out of tears and blood,
Unheard oppressions nourished in the dark
To try how much man's nature can endure 45
—If he dies under it, what harm? if not,
Why, one more trick is added to the rest
Worth a King's knowing, and what Ireland bears
England may learn to bear:—how all this while
That man has set himself to one dear task, 50
The bringing Charles to relish more and more
Power, power without law, power and blood too,
—Can I be still?

Hamp. For that you should be still.

Vane. Oh Hampden, then and now! The year he left us.
The People in full Parliament could wrest 55
The rights we claimed from the reluctant King;
And now, he'll find in an obscure small room
A stealthy gathering of great-hearted men
That take up England's cause: England is here!

Hamp. And who despairs of England?

Rud. That do I, 60

If Wentworth comes to rule her. I am sick
To think her wretched masters, Hamilton,
The muckworm Cottington, the maniac Laud,
May yet be longed-for back again. I say,
I do despair.

Vane. And, Rudyard, I'll say this— 65
Which all true men say after me, not loud
But solemnly and as you'd say a prayer!
This King, who treads our England underfoot,
Has just so much . . . it may be fear or craft,
As bids him pause at each fresh outrage; friends, 70
He needs some sterner hand to grasp his own,
Some voice to ask, "Why shrink? Am I not by?"
Now, one whom England loved for serving her,
Found in his heart to say, "I know where best
"The iron heel shall bruise her, for she leans 75
"Upon me when you trample." Witness, you!
So Wentworth heartened Charles, so England fell.
But inasmuch as life is hard to take
From England . . .

Many Voices. Go on, Vane! 'Tis well said, Vane!

Vane. Who has not so forgotten Runnymede!— 80

Voices. 'Tis well and bravely spoken, Vane! Go on!

Vane.—There are some little signs of late she knows
The ground no place for her. She glances round,
Wentworth has dropped the hand, is gone his way
On other service: what if she arise? 85
No! the King beckons, and beside him stands
The same bad man once more, with the same smile
And the same gesture. Now shall England crouch.
Or catch at us and rise?

Voices. The Renegade!

Haman! Ahithophel!

Hamp. Gentlemen of the North, 90

It was not thus the night your claims were urged,
And we pronounced the League and Covenant,
The cause of Scotland, England's cause as well:
Vane there, sat motionless the whole night through.

Vane. Hampden!

Fien. Stay, Vane!

Lou. Be just and patient, Vane! 95
Vane. Mind how you counsel patience, Loudon! you
 Have still a Parliament, and this your League
 To back it; you are free in Scotland still :
 While we are brothers, hope 's for England yet.
 But know you wherefore Wentworth comes? to quench 100
 This last of hopes? that he brings war with him?
 Know you the man's self? what he dares?
Lou. We know,
 All know—'t is nothing new.
Vane. And what 's new, then,
 In calling for his life? Why, Pym himself—
 You must have heard—ere Wentworth dropped our cause 105
 He would see Pym first; there were many more
 Strong on the people's side and friends of his,
 Eliot that's dead, Rudyard and Hampden here,
 But for these Wentworth cared not; only, Pym
 He would see—Pym and he were sworn, 'tis said, 110
 To live and die together; so, they met
 At Greenwich. Wentworth, you are sure, was long,
 Specious enough, the devil's argument
 Lost nothing on his lips; he'd have Pym own
 A patriot could not play a purer part 115
 Than follow in his track; they two combined
 Might put down England. Well, Pym heard him out;
 One glance—you know Pym's eye—one word was all :
 "You leave us, Wentworth! while your head is on,
 "I'll not leave you."
Hamp. Has he left Wentworth, then? 120
 Has England lost him? Will you let him speak,
 Or put your crude surmises in his mouth?
 Away with this! Will you have Pym or Vane?
Voices. Wait Pym's arrival! Pym shall speak.
Hamp. Meanwhile
 Let Loudon read the Parliament's report 125
 From Edinburgh: our last hope, as Vane says,
 Is in the stand it makes. Loudon!
Vane. No, no!
 Silent I can be: not indifferent!
Hamp. Then each keep silence, praying God to spare

His anger, cast not England quite away 130
In this her visitation !

A Puritan. Seven years long
The Midianite drove Israel into dens
And caves. Till God sent forth a mighty man,

Pym enters.

Even Gideon !

Pym. Wentworth's come : nor sickness, care,
The ravaged body nor the ruined soul, 135
More than the winds and waves that beat his ship,
Could keep him from the King. He has not reached
Whitehall : they've hurried up a Council there
To lose no time and find him work enough.

Where's Loudon ? Your Scots' Parliament . . .

Lou. Holds firm : 140

We were about to read reports.

Pym. The King

Has just dissolved your Parliament.

Lou. and other Scots. Great God !

An oath-breaker ! Stand by us, England, then !

Pym. The King's too sanguine : doubtless Wentworth's
here ;

But still some little form might be kept up. 145

Hamp. Now speak, Vane ! Rudyard you had much to say !

Hol. The rumour's false, then . . .

Pym. Ay, the Court gives out

His own concerns have brought him back : I know

'Tis the King calls him. Wentworth supersedes

The tribe of Cottingtons and Hamiltons, 150

Whose part is played ; there's talk enough, by this,—

Merciful talk, the King thinks : time is now

To turn the record's last and bloody leaf

That, chronicling a nation's great despair,

Tells they were long rebellious, and their lord 155

Indulgent, till, all kind expedients tried,

He drew the sword on them and reigned in peace.

Laud's laying his religion on the Scots

Was the last gentle entry : the new page

Shall run, the King thinks, " Wentworth thrust it down 160

At the sword's point."

A Puritan. I'll do your bidding, Pym,
England's and God's—one blow!

Pym. A goodly thing—
We all say, friends, it is a goodly thing
To right that England. Heaven grows dark above :
Let's snatch one moment ere the thunder fall, 165

To say how well the English spirit comes out
Beneath it! All have done their best, indeed,
From lion Eliot, that grand Englishman,
To the least here: and who, the least one here,
When she is saved (for her redemption dawns 170
Dimly, most dimly, but it dawns—it dawns)

Who'd give at any price his hope away
Of being named along with the Great Men?
We would not—no, we would not give that up!

Hamp. And one name shall be dearer than all names. 175
When children, yet unborn, are taught that name
After their fathers',—taught what matchless man . . .

Pym. . . . Saved England? What if Wentworth's should
be still
That name?

Rud. and others. We have just said it, Pym! His death
Saves her! We said it—there's no way beside! 180
I'll do God's bidding, Pym! They struck down Joab
And purged the land.

Vane. No villanous striking-down!

Rud. No, a calm vengeance: let the whole land rise
And shout for it. No Feltons!

Pym. Ruyard, no!
England rejects all Feltons; most of all 185
Since Wentworth . . . Hampden, say the trust again
Of England in her servants!—but I'll think
You know me, all of you. Then, I believe,
Spite of the past, Wentworth rejoins you, friends!

Vane and others. Wentworth? Apostate! Judas!
Double-dyed 190

A traitor! Is it Pym, indeed . . .

Pym. . . . Who says
Vane never knew that Wentworth, loved that man,

Was used to stroll with him, arm locked in arm,
 Along the streets to see the people pass,
 And read in every island-countenance 195
 Fresh argument for God against the King,—
 Never sat down, say, in the very house
 Where Eliot's brow grew broad with noble thoughts,
 (You've joined us, Hampden—Hollis, you as well.)
 And then left talking over Gracchus' death . . . 200

Vane. To frame, we know it well, the choicest clause
 In the Petition of Right: he framed such clause
 One month before he took at the King's hand
 His Northern Presidency, which that Prayer
 Denounced.

Pym. Too true! Never more, never more 205
 Walked we together! Most alone I went.
 I have had friends—all here are fast my friends—
 But I shall never quite forget that friend.
 And yet it could not but be real in him!
 You, Vane,—you, Rudyard, have no right to trust 210
 To Wentworth: but can no one hope with me?
 Hampden, will Wentworth dare shed English blood
 Like water?

Hamp. Ireland is Aceldama.

Pym. Will he turn Scotland to a hunting-ground
 To please the King, now that he knows the King? 215
 The People or the King? and that King—Charles!

Hamp. Pym, all here know you: you'll not set your heart
 On any baseless dream. But say one deed
 Of Wentworth's, since he left us . . . [*Shouting without.*]

Vane. There! he comes,
 And they shout for him! Wentworth's at Whitehall, 220
 The King embracing him, now, as we speak,
 And he, to be his match in courtesies,
 Taking the whole war's risk upon himself,
 Now, while you tell us here how changed he is!
 Hear you?

Pym. And yet if 'tis a dream, no more, 225
 That Wentworth chose their side, and brought the King
 To love it as though Laud had loved it first,
 And the Queen after;—that he led their cause

Calm to success, and kept it spotless through,
 So that our very eyes could look upon 230
 The travail of our souls ; and close, content
 That violence, which something mars even right
 Which sanctions it, had taken off no grace
 From its serene regard. Only a dream !
Hamp. We meet here to accomplish certain good 235
 By obvious means, and keep tradition up
 Of free assemblages, else obsolete,
 In this poor chamber : nor without effect
 Has friend met friend to counsel and confirm,
 As, listening to the beats of England's heart, 240
 We spoke its wants to Scotland's prompt reply
 By these her delegates. Remains alone
 That word grow deed, as with God's help it shall—
 But with the devil's hindrance, who doubts too ?
 Looked we or no that tyranny should turn 245
 Her engines of oppression to their use ?
 Whereof, suppose the worst be Wentworth here—
 Shall we break off the tactics which succeed
 In drawing out our formidablest foe,
 Let bickering and disunion take their place ? 250
 Or count his presence as our conquest's proof,
 And keep the old arms at their steady play ?
 Proceed to England's work ! Fiennes, read the list !
Fiennes. Ship-money is refused or fiercely paid
 In every county, save the northern parts 255
 Where Wentworth's influence . . . [*Shouting.*
Vane. I, in England's name,
 Declare her work, this way, at end ! Till now,
 Up to this moment, peaceful strife was best.
 We English had free leave to think ; till now,
 We had the shadow of a Parliament 260
 In Scotland. But all 's changed : they change the first,
 They try brute-force for law, they, first of all . . .
Voices. Good ! Talk enough ! The old true hearts with ;
 Vane !
Vane. Till we crush Wentworth for her, there 's no act
 Serves England !
Voices. Vane for England !

Pym. Pym should be 265
Something to England. I seek Wentworth, friends.

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

Lady CARLISLE and WENTWORTH.

Went. And the King?

Lady Car. Wentworth, lean on me! Sit then!
I'll tell you all; this horrible fatigue
Will kill you.

Went. No;—or, Lucy, just your arm;
I'll not sit till I've cleared this up with him:
After that, rest. The King?

Lady Car. Confides in you. 5

Went. Why? or, why now?—They have kind throats, the
knaves!

Shout for me—they!

Lady Car. You come so strangely soon:
Yet we took measures to keep off the crowd.
Did they shout for you?

Went. Wherefore should they not?
Does the King take such measures for himself? 10
Beside, there's such a dearth of malcontents,
You say!

Lady Car. I said but few dared carp at you.

Went. At me? at us, I hope! The King and I!
He's surely not disposed to let me bear
The fame away from him of these late deeds 15
In Ireland? I am yet his instrument,
Be it for well or ill? He trusts me, too!

Lady Car. The King, dear Wentworth, purposes, I said,
To grant you, in the face of all the Court . . .

Went. All the Court! Evermore the Court about us! 20
Savile and Holland, Hamilton and Vane
About us,—then the King will grant me—what?
That he for once put these aside and say—
“Tell me your whole mind, Wentworth!”

Lady Car.

You professed

You would be calm.

Went. Lucy, and I am calm! 25
 How else shall I do all I come to do,—
 Broken, as you may see, body and mind,
 How shall I serve the King? Time wastes meanwhile,
 You have not told me half. His footstep! No.
 Quick, then, before I meet him,—I am calm— 30
 Why does the King distrust me?

Lady Car. He does not
 Distrust you.

Went. Lucy, you can help me; you
 Have even seemed to care for me: one word!
 Is it the Queen?

Lady Car. No, not the Queen: the party
 That poisons the Queen's ear, Savile and Holland. 35

Went. I know, I know: old Vane, too, he's one too?
 Go on—and he's made Secretary. Well?
 Or leave them out and go straight to the charge;
 The charge!

Lady Car. Oh, there's no charge, no precise charge;
 Only they sneer, make light of—one may say, 40
 Nibble at what you do.

Went. I know! but Lucy,
 I reckoned on you from the first!—Go on!
 Was sure could I once see this gentle friend
 When I arrived, she'd throw an hour away
 To help her . . . what am I?

Lady Car. You thought of me, 45
 Dear Wentworth?

Went. But go on! The party here!

Lady Car. They do not think your Irish Government
 Of that surpassing value . . .

Went. The one thing
 Of value! The one service that the crown
 May count on! All that keeps these very Vanes 50
 In power, to vex me—not that they do vex,
 Only it might vex some to hear that service
 Decried, the sole support that's left the King!

Lady Car. So the Archbishop says.

Went. Ah? well, perhaps

The only hand held up in my defence 55
 May be old Laud's! These Hollands then, these Saviles
 Nibble? They nibble?—that's the very word!

Lady Car. Your profit in the Customs, Bristol says,
 Exceeds the due proportion: while the tax . . .

Went. Enough! 't is too unworthy,—I am not 60
 So patient as I thought! What's Pym about?

Lady Car. Pym?

Went. Pym and the People.

Lady Car. Oh, the Faction!

Extinct—of no account: there'll never be
 Another Parliament.

Went. Tell Savile that!

You may know—(ay, you do—the creatures here 65
 Never forget!) that in my earliest life

I was not . . . much that I am now! The King

May take my word on points concerning Pym

Before Lord Savile's, Lucy, or if not,

I bid them ruin their wise selves, not me, 70

These Vanes and Hollands! I'll not be their tool

Who might be Pym's friend yet.

But there's the King!

Where is he?

Lady Car. Just apprised that you arrive.

Went. And why not here to meet me? I was told
 He sent for me, nay, longed for me.

Lady Car. Because,—

He is now . . . I think a Council's sitting now 75
 About this Scots affair.

Went. A Council sits?

They have not taken a decided course

Without me in the matter?

Lady Car. I should say . . .

Went. The war? They cannot have agreed to that? 80

Not the Scots' war?—without consulting me—

Me, that am here to show how rash it is,

How easy to dispense with?—Ah, you too

Against me! well, the King may take his time.

—Forget it, Lucy! Cares make peevish: mine 85

Weigh me (but 't is a secret) to my grave.

Lady Car. For life or death I am your own, dear friend!

Went. Heartless ! but all are heartless here. [Goes out.
 Go now,
 Forsake the 'People !—I did not forsake
 The People : they shall know it—when the King 90
 Will trust me !—who trusts all beside at once,
 While I have not spoke Vane and Savile fair,
 And am not trusted : have but saved the throne :
 Have not picked up the Queen's glove prettily,
 And am not trusted. But he'll see me now. 95
 Weston is dead : the Queen's half English now—
 More English : one decisive word will brush
 These insects from . . . the step I know so well !
 The King ! But now, to tell him . . . no—to ask
 What's in me he distrusts :—or, best begin 100
 By proving that this frightful Scots affair
 Is just what I foretold. So much to say,
 And the flesh fails, now, and the time is come,
 And one false step no way to be repaired !
 You were avenged, Pym, could you look on me. 105

Pym enters.

Went. I little thought of you just then.

Pym. No ? I
 Think always of you, Wentworth.

Went. The old voice !
 I wait the King, sir.

Pym. True—you look so pale !
 A Council sits within ; when that breaks up
 He'll see you.

Went. Sir, I thank you.
Pym. Oh, thank Laud ! 110

You know when Laud once gets on Church affairs
 The case is desperate : he'll not be long
 To-day : he only means to prove, to-day,
 We English all are mad to have a hand
 In butchering the Scots for serving God 115
 After their fathers' fashion : only that !

Went. Sir, keep your jests for those who relish them !
 (Does he enjoy their confidence ?) 'T is kind

To tell me what the Council does.

Pym. You grudge
That I should know it had resolved on war 120
Before you came? No need: you shall have all
The credit, trust me!

Went. Have the Council dared—
They have not dared . . . that is—I know you not.
Farewell, sir: times are changed.

Pym. —Since we two met
At Greenwich? Yes: poor patriots though we be, 125
You cut a figure, makes some slight return
For your exploits in Ireland! Changed indeed,
Could our friend Eliot look from out his grave!
Ah, Wentworth, one thing for acquaintance' sake,
Just to decide a question; have you, now, 130
Felt your old self since you forsook us?

Went. Sir!

Pym. Spare me the gesture! you misapprehend!
Think not I mean the advantage is with me.
I was about to say that, for my part,
I never quite held up my head since then— 135
Was quite myself since then: for first, you see,
I lost all credit after that event
With those who recollect how sure I was
Wentworth would outdo Eliot on our side.
Forgive me: Savile, old Vane, Holland here,
Eschew plain speaking: 'tis a trick I keep. 140

Went. How, when, where, Savile, Vane and Holland speak,
Plainly or otherwise, would have my scorn,
All of my scorn, sir. . . .

Pym. . . . Did not my poor thoughts
Claim somewhat?

Went. Keep your thoughts! believe the King 145
Mistrusts me for their prattle, all these Vanes
And Saviles! make your mind up, o' God's love,
That I am discontented with the King!

Pym. Why, you may be: I should be, that I know,
Were I like you.

Went. Like me?

Pym. I care not much 150

For titles : our friend Eliot died no lord,
 Hampden 's no lord, and Savile is a lord ;
 But you care, since you sold your soul for one.
 I can't think, therefore, your soul's purchaser
 Did well to laugh you to such utter scorn 155
 When you twice prayed so humbly for its price,
 The thirty silver pieces . . . I should say,
 The Earldom you expected, still expect,
 And may. Your letters were the movingest !
 Console yourself : I 've borne him prayers just now 160
 From Scotland not to be oppressed by Laud,
 Words moving in their way : he'll pay, be sure,
 As much attention as to those you sent.

Went. False, sir ! Who showed them you ? Suppose it so,
 The King did very well . . . nay, I was glad 165
 When it was shown me : I refused, the first !
 John Pym, you were my friend—forebear me once !

Pym. Oh, Wentworth, ancient brother of my soul,
 That all should come to this !

Went. Leave me !
Pym. My friend,
 Why should I leave you ?

Went. To tell Rudyard this, 170
 And Hampden this !

Pym. Whose faces once were bright
 At my approach, now sad with doubt and fear,
 Because I hope in you—yes, Wentworth, you
 Who never mean to ruin England—you
 Who shake off, with God's help, an obscene dream 175
 In this Ezekiel chamber, where it crept
 Upon you first, and wake, yourself, your true
 And proper self, our Leader, England's chief,
 And Hampden's friend !

This is the proudest day !

Come, Wentworth ! Do not even see the King ! 180
 The rough old room will seem itself again !
 We'll both go in together : you've not seen
 Hampden so long : come : and there's Fiennes : you'll have
 To know young Vane. This is the proudest day !

[*The KING enters.* WENTWORTH *lets fall* PYM's hand.]

Cha. Arrived, my lord?—This gentleman, we know, 185
Was your old friend.

The Scots shall be informed
What we determine for their happiness.

[*PYM goes out.*]

You have made haste, my lord.

Went. Sir, I am come . . .

Cha. To see an old familiar—nay, 't is well ;
Aid us with his experience ; this Scots' League 190
And Covenant spreads too far, and we have proofs
Their chiefs intrigue with France : the Faction, too,
Whereof your friend there is the head and front,
Abets them,—as he boasted, very like.

Went. Sir, trust me ! but for this once, trust me, sir ! 195

Cha. What can you mean ?

Went. That you should trust me, sir !
Oh—not for my sake ! but 't is sad, so sad
That for distrusting me, you suffer—you,
Whom I would die to serve : sir, do you think
That I would die to serve you ?

Cha. But rise, Wentworth ! 200

Went. What shall convince you ? What does Savile do
To prove him. . . Ah, one can't tear out one's heart
And show it, how sincere a thing it is !

Cha. Have I not trusted you ?

Went. Say aught but that !
There is my comfort, mark you : all will be 205
So different when you trust me—as you shall !
It has not been your fault,—I was away,
Mistook, maligned, how was the King to know ?
I am here, now—he means to trust me, now—
All will go on so well !

Cha. Be sure I do— 210
I've heard that I should trust you : as you came,
Your friend, the Countess, told me . . .

Went. No,—hear nothing—
Be told nothing about me !—you're not told
Your right hand serves you, or your children love you !

- Cha.* You love me, Wentworth : rise !
Went. I can speak now. 215
 I have no right to hide the truth. 'T is I
 Can save you : only I. Sir, what must be ?
Cha. Since Laud's assured (the minutes are within)
 —Loath as I am to spill my subjects' blood . . .
Went. That is, he'll have a war : what's done is done ! 220
Cha. They have intrigued with France ; that's clear to Laud.
Went. Has Laud suggested any way to meet
 The war's expense ?
Cha. He'd not decide so far
 Until you joined us.
Went. Most considerate !
 He's certain they intrigue with France, these Scots ? 225
 The People would be with us.
Cha. Pym should know.
Went. The People for us—were the People for us !
 Sir, a great thought comes to reward your trust ;
 Summon a Parliament ! in Ireland first,
 Then here.
Cha. In truth ?
Went. That saves us ! that puts off 230
 The war, gives time to right their grievances—
 To talk with Pym. I know the Faction, as
 Laud styles it, tutors Scotland : all their plans
 Suppose no Parliament : in calling one
 You take them by surprise. Produce the proofs 235
 Of Scotland's treason ; then bid England help :
 Even Pym will not refuse.
Cha. You would begin
 With Ireland ?
Went. Take no care for that : that's sure
 To prosper.
Cha. You shall rule me. You were best
 Return at once : but take this ere you go ! 240
 Now, do I trust you ? You're an Earl : my friend
 Of friends : yes, while . . . You hear me not !
Went. Say it all o'er again—but once again :
 The first was for the music—once again !
Cha. Strafford, my friend, there may have been reports, 245

Vain rumours. Henceforth touching Strafford is
To touch the apple of my sight: why gaze
So earnestly?

Went. I am grown young again,
And foolish. What was it we spoke of?

Cha. Ireland,
The Parliament,—

Went. I may go when I will? 250
—Now?

Cha. Are you tired so soon of us?

Went. My King!

But you will not so utterly abhor
A Parliament? I'd serve you any way.

Cha. You said just now this was the only way.

Went. Sir, I will serve you!

Cha. Strafford, spare yourself— 255
You are so sick, they tell me.

Went. 'T is my soul
That 's well and prospers now.

This Parliament—
We'll summon it, the English one—I'll care
For everything: You shall not need them much.

Cha. If they prove restive . . .

Went. I shall be with you. 260

Cha. Ere they assemble?

Went. I will come, or else

Deposit this infirm humanity
I' the dust. My whole heart stays with you, my King!

[As WENTWORTH goes out the QUEEN enters.]

Cha. That man must love me.

Queen. Is it over then?

Why, he looks yellower than ever! Well, 265
At least we shall not hear eternally
Of service—services: he 's paid at least.

Cha. Not done with: he engages to surpass
All yet performed in Ireland.

Queen. I had thought
Nothing beyond was ever to be done. 270

The war, Charles—will he raise supplies enough?

Cha. We've hit on an expedient; he . . . that is,

I have advised . . . we have decided on
The calling—in Ireland—of a Parliament.

Queen. O truly! You agree to that? Is that 275
The first fruit of his counsel? But I guessed
As much.

Cha. This is too idle, Henriette!
I should know best. He will strain every nerve,
And once a precedent established . . .

Queen. Notice 280
How sure he is of a long term of favour!
He'll see the next, and the next after that;
No end to Parliaments!

Cha. Well, it is done.
He talks it smoothly, doubtless. If, indeed,
The Commons here . . .

Queen. Here! You will summon them
Here? Would I were in France again to see 285
A King!

Cha. But, Henriette . . .
Queen. Oh, the Scots see clear!
Why should they bear your rule?

Cha. But listen, sweet!
Queen. Let Wentworth listen—you confide in him!
Cha. I do not, love,—I do not so confide!
The Parliament shall never trouble us 290

. . . Nay, hear me! I have schemes, such schemes: we'll buy
The leaders off: without that, Wentworth's counsel
Had ne'er prevailed on me. Perhaps I call it
To have excuse for breaking it for ever,
And whose will then the blame be? See you not? 295
Come, dearest!—look, the little fairy now,
That cannot reach my shoulder! Dearest, come!

ACT II.

SCENE I.—(As in Act I., Scene I.)

*The same party enters.**Bud.* Twelve subsidies!*Vane.* O Rudyard, do not laugh

At least!

Bud. True: Strafford called the Parliament—
’T is he should laugh!*A Puritan.* Out of the serpent’s root
Comes forth a cockatrice.*Fiennes.* —A stinging one,

If that’s the Parliament: twelve subsidies! 5

A stinging one! but, brother, where’s your word
For Strafford’s other nest-egg, the Scots’ war?*The Puritan.* His fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.*Fiennes.* Shall be? It chips the shell, man,—peeps abroad.
Twelve subsidies!—Why, how now, Vane?*Bud.* Peace, Fiennes! 10*Fiennes.* Ah?—But he was not more a dupe than I,
Or you, or any here, the day that Pym
Returned with the good news. Look up, friend Vane!
We all believed that Strafford meant us well
In summoning the Parliament.*HAMPDEN enters.**Vane.* Now, Hampden, 15
Clear me! I would have leave to sleep again:
I’d look the People in the face again:
Clear me from having, from the first, hoped, dreamed
Better of Strafford!*Hamp.* You may grow one day
A steadfast light to England, Henry Vane! 20*Bud.* Meantime, by flashes, I make shift to see.
Strafford revived our Parliaments; before,

War was but talked of; there's an army, now :
 Still, we've a Parliament! Poor Ireland bears
 Another wrench (she dies the hardest death!)— 25
 Why, speak of it in Parliament! and lo,
 'T is spoken, so console yourselves!

Fien. The jest!

We clamoured, I suppose, thus long, to win
 The privilege of laying on our backs
 A sorer burden than the King dares lay! 30

Rud. Mark now: we meet at length, complaints pour in
 From every county, all the land cries out
 On loans and levies, curses ship-money,
 Calls vengeance on the Star Chamber; we lend
 An ear. "Ay, lend them all the ears you have!" 35
 Puts in the King; "my subjects, as you find,
 "Are fretful, and conceive great things of you.
 "Just listen to them, friends; you'll sanction me
 "The measures they most wince at, make them yours,
 "Instead of mine, I know: and, to begin, 40
 "They say my levies pinch them,—raise me straight
 "Twelve subsidies!"

Fien. All England cannot furnish
 Twelve subsidies!

Hol. But Strafford, just returned
 From Ireland—what has he to do with that?
 How could he speak his mind? He left before. 45
 The Parliament assembled. Pym, who knows
 Strafford . . .

Rud. Would I were sure we know ourselves!
 What is for good, what bad,—who friend, who foe!

Hol. Do you count Parliaments no gain?

Rud. A gain?
 While the King's creatures overbalance us? 50
 —There's going on, beside, among ourselves
 A quiet, slow, but most effectual course
 Of buying over, sapping, leavening
 The lump till all is leaven. Glanville's gone.
 I'll put a case; had not the Court declared 55
 That no sum short of just twelve subsidies
 Will be accepted by the King—our House,

I say, would have consented to that offer
To let us buy off ship-money!

Hol. Most like,
If, say, six subsidies will buy it off,
The House . . .

60

Rud. Will grant them! Hampden, do you hear?
Congratulate with me! the King's the king,
And gains his point at last—our own assent
To that detested tax! All's over, then!
There's no more taking refuge in this room,
Protesting, "Let the King do what he will,
"We, England, are no party to our shame:
"Our day will come!" Congratulate with me!

65

PYM enters.

Vane. Pym, Strafford called this Parliament, you say,
But we'll not have our Parliaments like those
In Ireland, Pym!

70

Rud. Let him stand forth, your friend!
One doubtful act hides far too many sins;
It can be stretched no more, and, to my mind,
Begins to drop from those it covered.

Other Voices. Good!
Let him avow himself! No fitter time!
We wait thus long for you.

75

Rud. Perhaps, too long!
Since nothing but the madness of the Court,
In thus unmasking its designs at once,
Has saved us from betraying England. Stay—
This Parliament is Strafford's: let us vote
Our list of grievances too black by far
To suffer talk of subsidies: or best,
That ship-money's disposed of long ago
By England: any vote that's broad enough:
And then let Strafford, for the love of it,
Support his Parliament!

80

85

Vane. And vote as well
No war to be with Scotland! Hear you, Pym?
We'll vote, no war! No part nor lot in it
For England!

Many Voices. Vote, no war! Stop the new levies!
No Bishops' war! At once! When next we meet! 90

Pym. Much more when next we meet! Friends, which of
you

Since first the course of Strafford was in doubt,
Has fallen the most away in soul from me?

Vane. I sat apart, even now, under God's eye,
Pondering the words that should denounce you, Pym, 95
In presence of us all, as one at league
With England's enemy.

Pym. You are a good
And gallant spirit, Henry. Take my hand
And say you pardon me for all the pain
Till now! Strafford is wholly ours.

Many Voices. Sure? sure? 100

Pym. Most sure: for Charles dissolves the Parliament
While I speak here.

—And I must speak, friends, now!
Strafford is ours. The King detects the change,
Casts Strafford off for ever, and resumes
His ancient path: no Parliament for us, 105
No Strafford for the King!

Come, all of you,
To bid the King farewell, predict success
To his Scots' expedition, and receive
Strafford, our comrade now. The next will be
Indeed a Parliament!

Vane. Forgive me, Pym! 110

Voices. This looks like truth: Strafford can have, indeed,
No choice.

Pym. Friends, follow me! He's with the King.
Come, Hampden, and come, Rudyard, and come, Vane!
This is no sullen day for England, sirs!
Strafford shall tell you!

Voices. To Whitehall then! Come! 115

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

CHARLES and STRAFFORD.

Cha. Strafford!

Straf. Is it a dream? my papers, here—
 Thus, as I left them, all the plans you found
 So happy—(look! the track you pressed my hand
 For pointing out)—and in this very room,
 Over these very plans, you tell me, sir, 5
 With the same face, too—tell me just one thing
 That ruins them! How's this? What may this mean?
 Sir, who has done this?

Cha. Strafford, who but I?
 You bade me put the rest away: indeed
 You are alone.

Straf. Alone, and like to be! 10
 No fear, when some unworthy scheme grows ripe,
 Of those who hatched it, leaving me to loose
 The mischief on the world! Laud hatches war,
 Falls to his prayers, and leaves the rest to me,
 And I'm alone.

Cha. At least, you knew as much 15
 When first you undertook the war.

Straf. My liege,
 Was this the way? I said, since Laud would lap
 A little blood, 't were best to hurry over
 The loathsome business, not to be whole months
 At slaughter—one blow, only one, then, peace, 20
 Save for the dreams. I said, to please you both
 I'd lead an Irish army to the West,
 While in the South an English . . . but you look
 As though you had not told me fifty times
 'T was a brave plan! My army is all raised, 25
 I am prepared to join it . . .

Cha. Hear me, Strafford!

Straf. . . . When, for some little thing, my whole design
 Is set aside—(where is the wretched paper?)
 I am to lead—(ay, here it is)—to lead

The English army: why? Northumberland
That I appointed, chooses to be sick— 30
Is frightened: and, meanwhile, who answers for
The Irish Parliament? or army, either?
Is this my plan?

Cha. So disrespectful, sir?

Straf. My liege, do not believe it! I am yours, 35
Yours ever: 'tis too late to think about:
To the death, yours. Elsewhere, this untoward step
Shall pass for mine; the world shall think it mine.
But here! But here! I am so seldom here,
Seldom with you, my King! I, soon to rush 40
Alone upon a giant in the dark!

Cha. My Strafford!

Straf. [*examines papers awhile.*] "Seize the passes of the
Tyne!"

But, sir, you see—see all I say is true?
My plan was sure to prosper, so, no cause
To ask the Parliament for help; whereas 45
We need them frightfully.

Cha. Need the Parliament?

Straf. Now, for God's sake, sir, not one error more!
We can afford no error; we draw, now,
Upon our last resource: the Parliament
Must help us!

Cha. I've undone you, Strafford!

Straf. Nay— 50

Nay—why despond, sir, 'tis not come to that!
I have not hurt you? Sir, what have I said
To hurt you? I unsay it! Don't despond!
Sir, do you turn from me?

Cha. My friend of friends!

Straf. We'll make a shift. Leave me the Parliament! 55
Help they us ne'er so little and I'll make
Sufficient out of it. We'll speak them fair.
They're sitting, that's one great thing; that half gives
Their sanction to us; that's much: don't despond!
Why, let them keep their money, at the worst! 60
The reputation of the People's help
Is all we want: we'll make shift yet!

- Cha.* Good Strafford!
- Straf.* But meantime, let the sum be ne'er so small
They offer, we'll accept it: any sum—
For the look of it: the least grant tells the Scots 65
The Parliament is ours—their staunch ally
Turned ours: that told, there's half the blow to strike!
What will the grant be? What does Glanville think?
- Cha.* Alas!
- Straf.* My liege?
- Cha.* Strafford!
- Straf.* But answer me!
Have they . . . O surely not refused us half? 70
Half the twelve subsidies? We never looked
For all of them. How many do they give?
- Cha.* You have not heard . . .
- Straf.* (What has he done?)—Heard what?
But speak at once, sir, this grows terrible!
[*The King continuing silent.*
You have dissolved them!—I'll not leave this man. 75
Cha. 'T was old Vane's ill-judged vehemence.
Straf. Old Vane?
Cha. He told them, just about to vote the half,
That nothing short of all twelve subsidies
Would serve our turn, or be accepted.
Straf. Vane!
Vane! Who, sir, promised me that very Vane . . . 80
O God, to have it gone, quite gone from me,
The one last hope—I that despair, my hope—
That I should reach his heart one day, and cure
All bitterness one day, be proud again
And young again, care for the sunshine, too. 85
And never think of Eliot any more,—
God, and to toil for this, go far for this,
Get nearer, and still nearer, reach this heart
And find Vane there!
[*Suddenly taking up a paper, and continuing with
a forced calmness.*
Northumberland is sick;
Well, then, I take the army: Wilmot leads
The horse, and he, with Conway, must secure

The passes of the Tyne; Ormond supplies
 My place in Ireland. Here, we'll try the City:
 If they refuse a loan—debase the coin
 And seize the bullion! we've no other choice. 95
 Herbert . . .

And this while I am here! with you!
 And there are hosts such, hosts like Vane! I go,
 And, I once gone, they'll close around you, sir,
 When the least pique, pettiest mistrust, is sure
 To ruin me—and you along with me!
 Do you see that? And you along with me! 100
 —Sir, you'll not ever listen to these men,
 And I away, fighting your battle? Sir,
 If they—if She—charge me, no matter how—
 Say you, "At any time when he returns
 "His head is mine!" Don't stop me there! You know 105
 My head is yours, but never stop me there!

Cha. Too shameful, Strafford! You advised the war,
 And . . .

Straf. I! I! that was never spoken with
 Till it was entered on! That loathe the war!
 That say it is the maddest, wickedest . . . 110
 Do you know, sir, I think within my heart,
 That you would say I did advise the war;
 And if through your own weakness, or what's worse,
 These Scots, with God to help them, drive me back,
 You will not step between the raging People 115
 And me, to say . . .

I knew it! from the first
 I knew it! Never was so cold a heart!
 Remember that I said it—that I never
 Believed you for a moment!

—And, you loved me?
 You thought your perfidy profoundly hid 120
 Because I could not share the whisperings
 With Vane, with Savile? What, the face was masked?
 I had the heart to see, sir! Face of flesh,
 But heart of stone—of smooth cold frightful stone!
 Ay, call them! Shall I call for you? The Scots 125
 Graded to madness? Or the English—Pym—

Shall I call Pym, your subject? Oh, you think
I'll leave them in the dark about it all?
They shall not know you? Hampden, Pym shall not?

PYM, HAMPDEN, VANE, *etc.*, enter.

[*Dropping on his knees.*] Thus favoured with your gracious
countenance 130

What shall a rebel League avail against
Your servant, utterly and ever yours?
So, gentlemen, the King's not even left
The privilege of bidding me farewell
Who haste to save the People—that you style 135
Your People—from the mercies of the Scots
And France their friend?

[*To CHARLES.*] Pym's grave grey eyes are fixed
Upon you, sir!

Your pleasure, gentlemen?

Hamp. The King dissolved us—'t is the King we seek,
And not Lord Strafford.

Straf —Strafford, guilty too 140
Of counselling the measure. [*To CHARLES.*] (Hush . . .
you know—

You have forgotten—sir, I counselled it)
A heinous matter, truly! But the King
Will yet see cause to thank me for a course
Which now, perchance . . . (Sir, tell them so!)—he blames. 145
Well, choose some fitter time to make your charge:
I shall be with the Scots, you understand?
Then yelp at me!

Meanwhile, your Majesty
Binds me, by this fresh token of your trust . . .

[*Under the pretence of an earnest farewell, STRAFFORD conducts CHARLES to the door, in such a manner as to hide his agitation from the rest; as the King disappears, they turn as by one impulse to PYM, who has not changed his original posture of surprise.*

Hamp. Leave we this arrogant strong wicked man! 150
Vane and others. Hence, Pym! Come out of this unworthy
place!

To our old room again! He's gone.

[STRAFFORD, *just about to follow the King, looks back.*

Pym.

Not gone!

[*To STRAFFORD.*] Keep tryst! the old appointment's made
anew:

Forget not we shall meet again!

Straf.

So be it!

And if an army follows me?

Vane.

His friends

155

Will entertain your army!

Pym.

I'll not say

You have misreckoned, Strafford: time shows.

Perish

Body and spirit! Fool to feign a doubt,
Pretend the scrupulous and nice reserve
Of one whose prowess shall achieve the feat!

160

What share have I in it? Do I affect
To see no dismal sign above your head
When God suspends his ruinous thunder there?
Strafford is doomed. Touch him no one of you!

[*PYM, HAMPDEN, etc., go out.*

Straf. Pym, we shall meet again.

Lady CARLISLE *enters.*

You here, child?

Lady Car.

Hush— 165

I know it all: hush, Strafford!

Straf.

Ah? you know?

Well. I shall make a sorry soldier, Lucy!
All knights begin their enterprise, we read,
Under the best of auspices: 't is morn,
The Lady girds his sword upon the Youth
(He's always very young)—the trumpets sound,
Cups pledge him, and, why, the King blesses him—
You need not turn a page of the romance
To learn the Dreadful Giant's fate. Indeed.

170

We've the fair Lady here; but she apart,—
A poor-man, rarely having handled lance,
And rather old, weary, and far from sure
His Squires are not the Giant's friends. All's one:

175

Let us go forth !

Lady Car. Go forth ?

Straf. What matters it ?

We shall die gloriously—as the book says. 180

Lady Car. To Scotland ? not to Scotland ?

Straf. Am I sick

Like your good brother, brave Northumberland ?

Beside, these walls seem falling on me.

Lady Car. Strafford,

The wind that saps these walls can undermine
Your camp in Scotland, too. Whence creeps the wind ? 185

Have you no eyes except for Pym ? Look here !

A breed of silken creatures lurk and thrive

In your contempt. You'll vanquish Pym ? Old Vane

Can vanquish you. And Vane you think to fly ?

Rush on the Scots ! Do nobly ! Vane's slight sneer 190

Shall test success, adjust the praise, suggest

The faint result : Vane's sneer shall reach you there.

—You do not listen !

Straf. Oh,—I give that up !

There 's fate in it : I give all here quite up.

Care not what old Vane does or Holland does 195

Against me ! 'T is so idle to withstand !

In no case tell me what they do !

Lady Car. But, Strafford . . .

Straf. I want a little strife, beside ; real strife.

This petty, palace-warfare does me harm :

I shall feel better, fairly out of it. 200

Lady Car. Why do you smile ?

Straf. I got to fear them, child !

I could have torn his throat at first, old Vane's,

As he leered at me on his stealthy way

To the Queen's closet. Lord, one loses heart ! 205

I often found it in my heart to say,

“Do not traduce me to her !”

Lady Car. But the King . . .

Straf. The King stood there, 't is not so long ago,

—There ; and the whisper, Lucy, “Be my friend

“Of friends !”—My King ! I would have . . .

Lady Car. . . . Died for him ?

Straf. Sworn him true, Lucy : I can die for him. 210

Lady Car. But go not, Strafford! But you must renounce
This project on the Scots! Die, wherefore die?
Charles never loved you.

Straf. And he never will.

He's not of those who care the more for men
That they're unfortunate.

Lady Car. Then wherefore die 215
For such a master?

Straf. You that told me first
How good he was—when I must leave true friends
To find a truer friend!—that drew me here
From Ireland,—“I had but to show myself
“And Charles would spurn Vane, Savile and the rest”— 220
You, child, to ask me this?

Lady Car. (If he have set
His heart abidingly on Charles!)

Then, friend,
I shall not see you any more.

Straf. Yes, Lucy.
There's one man here I have to meet.

Lady Car. (The King!
What way to save him from the King?

My soul— 225
That lent from its own store the charmed disguise
That clothes the King—he shall behold my soul!)
Strafford,—I shall speak best if you'll not gaze
Upon me : I had never thought, indeed,
To speak, but you would perish too, so sure! 230
Could you but know what't is to bear, my friend,
One image stamped within you, turning blank
The else imperial brilliance of your mind,—
A weakness, but most precious,—like a flaw
I' the diamond, which should shape forth some sweet face 235
Yet to create, and meanwhile treasured there
Lest nature lose her gracious thought for ever!

Straf. When could it be? no! Yet . . . was it the day
We waited in the anteroom, till Holland
Should leave the presence-chamber?

Lady Car. What?

- Straf.* Described to you my love for Charles ? —That I 240
- Lady Car.* (Ah, no—
One must not lure him from a love like that !
Oh, let him love the King and die ! 'T is past.
I shall not serve him worse for that one brief
And passionate hope, silent for ever now !) 245
And you are really bound for Scotland, then ?
I wish you well : you must be very sure
Of the King's faith, for Pym and all his crew
Will not be idle—setting Vane aside !
Straf. If Pym is busy,—you may write of Pym. 250
Lady Car. What need, since there's your King to take your
part ?
He may endure Vane's counsel ; but for Pym—
Think you he'll suffer Pym to . . .
Straf. Child, your hair
Is glossier than the Queen's !
Lady Car. Is that to ask
A curl of me ?
Straf. Scotland—the weary way ! 255
Lady Car. Stay, let me fasten it.
—A rival's, Strafford ?
Straf. [*showing the George.*] He hung it there : twine yours
around it, child !
Lady Car. No—no—another time—I trifle so !
And there's a masque on foot. Farewell. The Court
Is dull ; do something to enliven us 260
In Scotland : we expect it at your hands.
Straf. I shall not fail in Scotland.
Lady Car. Prosper—if
You'll think of me sometimes !
Straf. How think of him
And not of you ? of you, the lingering streak
(A golden one) in my good fortune's eve. 265
Lady Car. Strafford . . . Well, when the eve has its last
streak
The night has its first star.
Straf. [*She goes out.*
That voice of hers—

You'd think she had a heart sometimes ! His voice
Is soft too.

Only God can save him now.

Be Thou about his bed, about his path ! 270
His path ! Where 's England's path ? Diverging wide,
And not to join again the track my foot
Must follow—whither ? All that forlorn way
Among the tombs ! Far—far—till . . . What, they do
Then join again, these paths ? For, huge in the dusk, 275
There's—Pym to face !

Why then, I have a foe

To close with, and a fight to fight at last
Worthy my soul ! What, do they beard the King,
And shall the King want Strafford at his need ?
Am I not here ?

Not in the market-place, 280
Pressed on by the rough artisans, so proud
To catch a glance from Wentworth ! They lie down
Hungry yet smile " Why, it must end some day :
" Is he not watching for our sake ? " Not there !
But in Whitehall, the whited sepulchre, 285
The . . .

Curse nothing to-night ! Only one name

They 'll curse in all those streets to-night. Whose fault ?
Did I make kings ? set up the first, a man
To represent the multitude, receive
All love in right of them—supplant them so, 290
Until you love the man and not the king——
The man with the mild voice and mournful eyes
Which send me forth.

—To breast the bloody sea

That sweeps before me : with one star for guide.
Night has its first, supreme, forsaken star. 295

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Opposite Westminster Hall.*

SIR HENRY VANE, LORD SAVILE, LORD HOLLAND *and others of the Court.*

Sir H. Vane. The Commons thrust you out ?

Savile. And what kept you

From sharing their civility ?

Sir H. Vane. Kept me ?

Fresh news from Scotland, sir ! worse than the last,

If that may be. All 's up with Strafford there :

Nothing to bar the mad Scots marching hither

5

Next Lord's-day morning. That detained me, sir !

Well now, before they thrust you out,—go on,—

Their Speaker—did the fellow Lenthal say

All we set down for him ?

Hol. Not a word missed.

Ere he began, we entered, Savile, I,

10

And Bristol and some more, with hope to breed

A wholesome awe in the new Parliament.

But such a gang of graceless ruffians, Vane,

As glared at us !

Vane. So many ?

Savile. Not a bench

Without its complement of burly knaves ;

15

Your hopeful son among them : Hampden leant

Upon his shoulder—think of that !

Vane. I 'd think

On Lenthal's speech, if I could get at it.

Urged he, I ask, how grateful they should prove

For this unlooked-for summons from the King ?

20

Hol. Just as we drilled him.

Vane. That the Scots will march

On London ?

Hol. All, and made so much of it,

A dozen subsidies at least seemed sure

To follow, when . . .

Vane. Well ?

Hol. 'T is a strange thing, now !
I 've a vague memory of a sort of sound, 25
A voice, a kind of vast unnatural voice—
Pym, sir, was speaking ! Savile, help me out :
What was it all ?

Sav. Something about " a matter "—
No,— " work for England."

Hol. " England's great revenge "
He talked of.

Sav. How should I get used to Pym 30
More than yourselves ?

Hol. However that be,
'T was something with which we had nought to do,
For we were " strangers " and 't was " England's work "—
(All this while looking us straight in the face)
In other words, our presence might be spared. 35
So, in the twinkling of an eye, before
I settled to my mind what ugly brute
Was likest Pym just then, they yelled us out,
Locked the doors after us, and here are we.

Vane. Eliot's old method . . .

Sav. Prithee, Vane, a truce 40
To Eliot and his times, and the great Duke,
And how to manage Parliaments ! 'T was you
Advised the Queen to summon this : why, Strafford
(To do him justice) would not hear of it.

Vane. Say rather, you have done the best of turns 45
To Strafford : he's at York, we all know why.
I would you had not set the Scots on Strafford
Till Strafford put down Pym for us, my lord !

Sav. Was it I altered Strafford's plans ? did I . . .

A Messenger enters.

Mes. The Queen, my lords—she sends me : follow me 50
At once ; 't is very urgent ! She requires
Your counsel : something perilous and strange
Occasions her command.

Sav. We follow, friend !

Now, Vane;—your Parliament will plague us all!

Vane. No Strafford here beside!

Sav. If you dare hint 55

I had a hand in his betrayal, sir . . .

Hol. Nay, find a fitter time for quarrels—Pym

Will overmatch the best of you: and, think,
The Queen!

Vane. Come on, then: understand, I loathe
Strafford as much as any—but his use! 60

To keep off Pym, to screen a friend or two,
I would we had reserved him yet awhile.

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

The QUEEN and Lady CARLISLE.

Queen. It cannot be.

Lady Car. It is so.

Queen. Why, the House

Have hardly met.

Lady Car. They met for that.

Queen. No, no!

Meet to impeach Lord Strafford! 'T is a jest.

Lady Car. A bitter one.

Queen. Consider! 'T is the House

We summoned so reluctantly, which nothing 5

But the disastrous issue of the war

Persuaded us to summon. They'll wreak all

Their spite on us, no doubt; but the old way

Is to begin by talk of grievances:

They have their grievances to busy them. 10

Lady Car. Pym has begun his speech.

Queen. Where's Vane?—That is,

Pym will impeach Lord Strafford if he leaves

His Presidency; he's at York, we know,

Since the Scots beat him: why should he leave York?

Lady Car. Because the King sent for him.

Queen. Ah—but if 15

The King did send for him, he let him know

We had been forced to call a Parliament—
 A step which Strafford, now I come to think,
 Was vehement against.

Lady Car. The policy
 Escaped him, of first striking Parliaments 20
 To earth, then setting them upon their feet
 And giving them a sword : but this is idle.
 Did the King send for Strafford ? He will come.

Queen. And what am I to do ?

Lady Car. What do ? Fail, madam !
 Be ruined for his sake ! what matters how, 25
 So it but stand on record that you made
 An effort, only one ?

Queen. The King away
 At Theobald's !

Lady Car. Send for him at once : he must
 Dissolve the House.

Queen. Wait till Vane finds the truth
 Of the report : then . . .

Lady Car. —It will matter little 30
 What the King does. Strafford that lends his arm
 And breaks his heart for you !

Sir H. VANE enters.

Vane The Commons, madam,
 Are sitting with closed doors. A huge debate,
 No lack of noise ; but nothing, I should guess,
 Concerning Strafford : Pym has certainly 35
 Not spoken yet.

Queen [To *Lady CARLISLE*]. You hear ?

Lady Car. I do not hear
 That the King 's sent for !

Sir H. Vane. Savile will be able
 To tell you more.

HOLLAND enters.

Queen. The last news, Holland ?
Hol. Pym
 Is raging like a fire. The whole House means 40
 To follow him together to Whitehall

And force the King to give up Strafford.

Queen. Strafford ?

Hol. If they content themselves with Strafford ! Laud
Is talked of, Cottington and Windebank too.
Pym has not left out one of them—I would
You heard Pym raging.

Queen. Vane, go find the King ! 45
Tell the King, Vane, the People follow Pym
To brave us at Whitehall !

SAVILLE enters.

Savile. Not to Whitehall—
'T is to the Lords they go : they seek redress
On Strafford from his peers—the legal way,
They call it.

Queen. (Wait, Vane !)

Sav. But the adage gives 50
Long life to threatened men. Strafford can save
Himself so readily : at York, remember,
In his own county : what has he to fear ?
The Commons only mean to frighten him
From leaving York. Surely, he will not come. 55

Queen. Lucy, he will not come !

Lady Car. Once more, the King
Has sent for Strafford. He will come.

Vane. Oh doubtless !
And bring destruction with him : that's his way.
What but his coming spoilt all Conway's plan ?
The King must take his counsel, choose his friends, 60
Be wholly ruled by him ! What's the result ?
The North that was to rise, Ireland to help,—
What came of it ? In my poor mind, a fright
Is no prodigious punishment.

Lady Car. A fright ?
Pym will fail worse than Strafford, if he thinks 65
To frighten him. [*To the QUEEN*]. You will not save him
then ?

Sav. When something like a charge is made, the King
Will best know how to save him : and 't is clear,
While Strafford suffers nothing by the matter,

The King may reap advantage : this in question, 70
 No dinning you with ship-money complaints !

Queen [*To Lady CARLISLE*]. If we dissolve them, who
 will pay the army ?

Protect us from the insolent Scots ?

Lady Car. In truth,
 I know not, madam. Strafford's fate concerns me
 But little : you desired to learn what course 75
 Would save him : I obey you.

Vane. Notice, too,
 There can't be fairer ground for taking full
 Revenge—(Strafford's revengeful)—than he'll have
 Against his old friend Pym.

Queen. Why, he shall claim
 Vengeance on Pym !

Vane. And Strafford, who is he 80
 To 'scape unscathed amid the accidents
 That harass all beside ? I, for my part,
 Should look for something of discomfiture
 Had the King trusted me so thoroughly
 And been so paid for it.

Hol. He'll keep at York : 85
 All will blow over : he'll return no worse,
 Humbled a little, thankful for a place
 Under as good a man. Oh, we'll dispense
 With seeing Strafford for a month or two !

STRAFFORD enters.

Queen. You here !

Straf. The King sends for me, madam.

Queen. Sir, 90
 The King . . .

Straf. An urgent matter that imports the King !
 [*To Lady CARLISLE*]. Why, Lucy, what's in agitation now,
 That all this muttering and shrugging, see
 Begins at me ? They do not speak !

Lady Car. 'T is welcome !
 For we are proud of you—happy and proud 95
 To have you with us, Strafford ! You were staunch
 At Durham : you did well there ! Had you not

Been stayed, you might have . . . we said, even now,
Our hope 's in you !

Sir H. Vane [*To Lady CARLISLE*]. The Queen would speak
with you.

Straf. Will one of you, his servants here, vouchsafe 100
To signify my presence to the King ?

Sav. An urgent matter ?

Straf. None that touches you,
Lord Savile ! Say, it were some treacherous
Sly pitiful intriguing with the Scots—
You would go free, at least ! (They half divine 105
My purpose !) Madam, shall I see the King ?
The service I would render much concerns
His welfare.

Queen. But his Majesty, my lord,
May not be here, may . . .

Straf. Its importance, then,
Must plead excuse for this withdrawal, madam, 110
And for the grief it gives Lord Savile here.

Queen. [*Who has been conversing with VANE and HOLLAND.*]
The King will see you, sir !

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Mark me : Pym's worst
Is done by now : he has impeached the Earl,
Or found the Earl too strong for him, by now.
Let us not seem instructed ! We should work 115
No good to Strafford, but deform ourselves
With shame in the world's eye. [*To STRAFFORD.*] His Majesty
Has much to say with you.

Straf. Time fleeting, too !
[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] No means of getting them away ?
And She—
What does she whisper ? Does she know my purpose ? 120
What does she think of it ? Get them away !

Queen [*To Lady CARLISLE.*]. He comes to baffle Pym—he
thinks the danger
Far off: tell him no word of it ! a time
For help will come ; we 'll not be wanting then.
Keep him in play, Lucy—you, self-possessed 125
And calm ! [*To STRAFFORD.*] To spare your lordship some
delay

I will myself acquaint the King. [*To Lady CARLISLE.*]
Beware!

[*The QUEEN, VANE, HOLLAND and SAVILE go out.*]

Straf. She knows it?

Lady Car. Tell me, Strafford!

Straf. Afterward!

This moment's the great moment of all time.

She knows my purpose?

Lady Car. Thoroughly: just now 130

She bade me hide it from you.

Straf. Quick, dear child,

The whole o' the scheme?

Lady Car. (Ah, he would learn if they

Connive at Pym's procedure! Could they but

Have once apprised the King! But there's no time

For falsehood, now.) Strafford, the whole is known. 135

Straf. Known and approved?

Lady Car. Hardly discountenanced.

Straf. And the King—say, the King consents as well?

Lady Car. The King's not yet informed, but will not dare
To interpose.

Straf. What need to wait him, then?

He'll sanction it! I stayed, child, tell him, long; 140

It vexed me to the soul—this waiting here.

You know him, there's no counting on the King.

Tell him I waited long!

Lady Car. (What can he mean?

Rejoice at the King's hollowness?)

Straf. I knew

They would be glad of it,—all over once, 145

I knew they would be glad: but he'd contrive,

The Queen and he, to mar, by helping it,

An angel's making.

Lady Car. (Is he mad?) Dear Strafford,

You were not wont to look so happy.

Straf. Sweet,

I tried obedience thoroughly. I took 150

The King's wild plan: of course, ere I could reach

My army, Conway ruined it. I drew

The wrecks together, raised all heaven and earth,

And would have fought the Scots: the King at once
 Made truce with them. Then, Lucy, then, dear child, 155
 God put it in my mind to love, serve, die
 For Charles, but never to obey him more!
 While he endured their insolence at Ripon
 I fell on them at Durham. But you 'll tell
 The King I waited? All the ante-room 160
 Is filled with my adherents.

Lady Car. Strafford—Strafford,

What daring act is this you hint?

Straf. No, no!

'T is here, not daring if you knew! all here!

[*Drawing papers from his breast.*

Full proof, see, ample proof—does the Queen know
 I have such damning proof? Bedford and Essex, 165
 Brooke, Warwick, Savile (did you notice Savile?
 The simper that I spoil?) Saye, Mandeville—
 Sold to the Scots, body and soul, by Pym!

Lady Car. Great heaven!

Straf. From Savile and his lords, to Pym

And his losels, crushed!—Pym shall not ward the blow 170

Nor Savile creep aside from it! The Crew

And the Cabal—I crush them!

Lady Car. And you go—

Strafford,—and now you go?—

Straf. —About no work

In the background, I promise you! I go

Straight to the House of Lords to claim these knaves. 175

Mainwaring!

Lady Car. Stay—stay, Strafford!

Straf. She 'll return,

The Queen—some little project of her own!

No time to lose: the King takes fright perhaps.

Lady Car. Pym's strong, remember!

Straf. Very strong, as fits

The Faction's head—with no offence to Hampden, 180

Vane, Rudyard and my loving Hollis: one

And all they lodge within the Tower to-night

In just equality. Bryan! Mainwaring!

[*Many of his Adherents enter.*

The Peers debate just now (a lucky chance)
 On the Scots' war; my visit 's opportune. 185
 When all is over, Bryan, you proceed
 To Ireland: these dispatches, mark me, Bryan,
 Are for the Deputy, and these for Ormond:
 We want the army here—my army, raised
 At such a cost, that should have done such good, 190
 And was inactive all the time! no matter,
 We 'll find a use for it. Willis . . . or, no—you!
 You, friend, make haste to York: bear this, at once . . .
 Or,—better stay for form's sake, see yourself
 The news you carry. You remain with me 195
 To execute the Parliament's command,
 Mainwaring! Help to seize these lesser knaves,
 Take care there 's no escaping at backdoors:
 I 'll not have one escape, mind me—not one!
 I seem revengful, Lucy? Did you know 200
 What these men dare!

Lady Car. It is so much they dare!

Straf. I proved that long ago; my turn is now.
 Keep sharp watch, Goring, on the citizens!
 Observe who harbours any of the brood
 That scramble off: be sure they smart for it! 205
 Our coffers are but lean.

And you, child, too,
 Shall have your task; deliver this to Laud.
 Laud will not be the slowest in my praise:
 "Thorough" he 'll cry!—Foolish, to be so glad!
 This life is gay and glowing, after all: 210
 'T is worth while, Lucy, having foes like mine
 Just for the bliss of crushing them. To-day
 Is worth the living for.

Lady Car. That reddening brow?

You seem . . .

Straf. Well—do I not? I would be well—
 I could not but be well on such a day! 215
 And, this day ended, 't is of slight import
 How long the ravaged frame subjects the soul
 In Strafford.

Lady Car. Noble Strafford!

Straf. No farewell !
I'll see you anon, to-morrow—the first thing.
—If She should come to stay me !

Lady Car. Go—'t is nothing— 220
Only my heart that swells ; it has been thus
Ere now : go, Strafford !

Straf. To-night, then, let it be.
I must see Him : you, the next after Him.
I'll tell you how Pym looked. Follow me, friends !
You, gentlemen, shall see a sight this hour 225
To talk of all your lives. Close after me !
“ My friend of friends ! ”

[STRAFFORD and the rest go out.]

Lady Car. The King—ever the King !
No thought of one beside, whose little word
Unveils the King to him—one word from me,
Which yet I do not breathe !
Ah, have I spared 230
Strafford a pang, and shall I seek reward
Beyond that memory ? Surely too, some way
He is the better for my love. No, no—
He would not look so joyous—I'll believe
His very eye would never sparkle thus, 235
Had I not prayed for him this long, long while.

SCENE III.—*The Antechamber of the House of Lords.*

Many of the Presbyterian Party. The adherents of STRAFFORD, etc.

A Group of Presbyterians.—1. I tell you he struck
Maxwell : Maxwell sought
To stay the Earl : he struck him and passed on.
2. Fear as you may, keep a good countenance
Before these rufflers.

3. Strafford here the first,
With the great army at his back !

4. No doubt. 5
I would Pym had made haste. That's Bryan, hush—
The gallant pointing.

Strafford's Followers.—1. Mark these worthies, now!
 2. A goodly gathering! "Where the carcass is
 "There shall the eagles"—what's the rest?

3. For eagles
 Say crows.

A Presbyterian. Stand back, sirs!

One of Strafford's Followers. Are we in Geneva? 10

A Presbyterian. No, nor in Ireland; we have leave to
 breathe.

One of Strafford's Followers. Truly? Behold how privileged
 we be

That serve "King Pym!" There's Some-one at Whitehall
 Who skulks obscure; but Pym struts . . .

The Presbyterian. Nearer.

A Follower of Strafford. Higher,

We look to see him. [*To his Companions.*] I'm to have St.
 John 15

In charge; was he among the knaves just now
 That followed Pym within there?

Another. The gaunt man

Talking with Rudyard. Did the Earl expect
 Pym at his heels so fast? I like it not.

MAXWELL enters.

Another. Why, man, they rush into the net! Here's
 Maxwell— 20

Ha, Maxwell? How the brethren flock around
 The fellow! Do you feel the Earl's hand yet
 Upon your shoulder, Maxwell?

Max. Gentlemen,
 Stand back! a great thing passes here.

A Follower of Strafford. [*To another.*] The Earl
 Is at his work! [*To M.*] Say, Maxwell, what great thing! 25
 Speak out! [*To a Presbyterian.*] Friend, I've a kindness for
 you! Friend,

I've seen you with St. John: O stockishness!
 Wear such a ruff, and never call to mind
 St. John's head in a charger? How, the plague,
 Not laugh?

Another. Say, Maxwell, what great thing!

Another. Nay, wait: 30
The jest will be to wait.

First. And who 's to bear
These demure hypocrites? You 'd swear they came . . .
Came . . . just as we come!

[*A Puritan enters hastily and without observing
STRAFFORD'S Followers.*

The Puritan. How goes on the work?
Has Pym . . .

A Follower of Strafford. The secret 's out at last. Aha,
The carrion 's scented! Welcome, crow the first! 35
Gorge merrily, you with the blinking eye!
"King Pym has fallen!"

The Puritan. Pym?

A Strafford. Pym!

A Presbyterian. Only Pym?

Many of Strafford's Followers. No, brother, not Pym only;
Vane as well,

Rudyard as well, Hampden, St. John as well!

A Presbyterian. My mind misgives: can it be true?

Another. Lost! Lost! 40

A Strafford. Say we true, Maxwell?

The Puritan. Pride before destruction,
A haughty spirit goeth before a fall.

Many of Strafford's Followers. Ah now! The very thing!
A word in season!

A golden apple in a silver picture,
To greet Pym as he passes!

[*The doors at the back begin to open, noise and light
issuing.*

Max. Stand back, all! 45

Many of the Presbyterians. I hold with Pym! And I!

Strafford's Followers. Now for the text!

He comes! Quick!

The Puritan. How hath the oppressor ceased!

The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked!

The sceptre of the rulers, he who smote

The people in wrath with a continual stroke,

That ruled the nations in his anger—he 50

Is persecuted and none hindereth !

[The doors open, and STRAFFORD issues in the greatest disorder, and amid cries form within of "Void the House."

Straf. Impeach me ! Pym ! I never struck, I think,
The felon on that calm insulting mouth
When it proclaimed—Pym's mouth proclaimed me . . . God ! 55
Was it a word, only a word that held
The outrageous blood back on my heart—which beats !
Which beats ! Some one word—"Traitor," did he say,
Bending that eye, brimful of bitter fire,
Upon me ?

Max. In the Commons' name, their servant 60
Demands Lord Strafford's sword.

Straf. What did you say ?

Max. The Commons bid me ask your lordship's sword.

Straf. Let us go forth : follow me, gentlemen !
Draw your swords too : cut any down that bar us.
On the King's service ! Maxwell, clear the way ! 65

[The PRESBYTERIANS prepare to dispute his passage.]

Straf. I stay : the King himself shall see me here.
Your tablets, fellow !
[To MAINWARING.] Give that to the King !
Yes, Maxwell, for the next half-hour, let be !
Nay, you shall take my sword !

[MAXWELL advances to take it.]
Or, no—not that !

Their blood, perhaps, may wipe out all thus far, 70
All up to that—not that ! Why, friend, you see
When the King lays your head beneath my foot
It will not pay for that. Go, all of you !

Max. I dare, my lord, to disobey ; none stir !

Straf. This gentle Maxwell !—Do not touch him, Bryan ! 75
[To the Presbyterians.] Whichever cur of you will carry this
Escapes his fellow's fate. None saves his life ?
None ? *[Cries from within of "STRAFFORD."]*

Slingsby, I've loved you at least : make haste !
Stab me ! I have not time to tell you why.
You then, my Bryan ! Mainwaring, you then ! 80
Is it because I spoke so hastily
At Allerton ? The King had vexed me.

[*To the Presbyterians.*] You!
 —Not even you? If I live over this,
 The King is sure to have your heads, you know!
 But what if I can't live this minute through? 85
 Pym, who is there with his pursuing smile!

[*Louder cries of "STRAFFORD."*]

The King! I troubled him, stood in the way
 Of his negotiations, was the one
 Great obstacle to peace, the Enemy
 Of Scotland: and he sent for me from York, 90
 My safety guaranteed—having prepared
 A Parliament—I see! And at Whitehall
 The Queen was whispering with Vane—I see
 The trap! [*Tearing off the George.*]

I tread a gewgaw underfoot,
 And cast a memory from me. One stroke, now! 95
 [*His own adherents disarm him. Renewed cries of "STRAFFORD."*]
 England! I see thy arm in this and yield.
 Pray you now—Pym awaits me—pray you now!

[*STRAFFORD reaches the doors: they open wide. HAMPDEN
 and a crowd discovered, and, at the bar, PYM standing
 apart. As STRAFFORD kneels, the scene shuts.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Whitehall.*

*The KING, the QUEEN, HOLLIS, Lady CARLISLE. (VANE, HOLLAND,
 SAVILE, in the background.)*

Lady Car. Answer them, Hollis, for his sake! One word!

Cha. [*To HOLLIS.*] You stand, silent and cold, as though

I were

Deceiving you—my friend, my playfellow

Of other times. What wonder after all?

Just so, I dreamed my People loved me.

Hol.

Sir,

It is yourself that you deceive, not me. 5

You 'll quit me comforted, your mind made up
That, since you 've talked thus much and grieved thus much,
All you can do for Strafford has been done.

Queen. If you kill Strafford—(come, we grant you leave, 10
Suppose)—

Hol. I may withdraw, sir ?

Lady Car. Hear them out !
'T is the last chance for Strafford ! Hear them out !

Hol. " If we kill Strafford "—on the eighteenth day
Of Strafford's trial—" We !"

Cha. Pym, my good Hollis—
Pym, I should say !

Hol. Ah, true—sir, pardon me ! 15
You witness our proceedings every day ;
But the screened gallery, I might have guessed,
Admits of such a partial glimpse at us,
Pym takes up all the room, shuts out the view.
Still, on my honour, sir, the rest of the place 20
Is not unoccupied. The Commons sit
—That 's England ; Ireland sends, and Scotland too,
Their representatives ; the Peers that judge
Are easily distinguished ; one remarks
The People here and there ; but the close curtain 25
Must hide so much !

Queen. Acquaint your insolent crew,
This day the curtain shall be dashed aside !
It served a purpose.

Hol. Think ! This very day ?
Ere Strafford rises to defend himself ?

Cha. I will defend him, sir ! sanction the past 30
This day : it ever was my purpose. Rage
At me, not Strafford !

Lady Car. Nobly !—will he not
Do nobly ?

Hol. Sir, you will do honestly ;
And, for that deed, I too would be a king.

Cha. Only, to do this now !—" deaf " (in your style) 35
" To subjects' prayers,"—I must oppose them now.
It seems their will the trial should proceed,—
So palpably their will !

Hol. You peril much,
 But it were no bright moment save for that.
 Strafford, your prime support, the sole roof-tree 40
 That props this quaking House of Privilege,
 (Floods come, winds beat, and see—the treacherous sand!)
 Doubtless, if the mere putting forth an arm
 Could save him, you 'd save Strafford.

Cha. And they dare
 Consummate calmly this great wrong! No hope? 45
 This ineffaceable wrong! No pity then?

Hol. No plague in store for perfidy?—Farewell!
 You called me, sir—[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] you, lady, bade me
 come

To save the Earl: I came, thank God for it,
 To learn how far such perfidy can go! 50
 You, sir, concert with me on saving him
 Who have just ruined Strafford!

Cha. I?—and how?
Hol. Eighteen days long he throws, one after one,
 Pym's charges back: a blind moth-eaten law!
 —He 'll break from it at last: and whom to thank? 55
 The mouse that gnawed the lion's net for him
 Got a good friend,—but he, the other mouse,
 That looked on while the lion freed himself—
 Fared he so well, does any fable say?

Cha. What can you mean?

Hol. Pym never could have proved 60
 Strafford's design of bringing up the troops
 To force this kingdom to obedience: Vane—
 Your servant, not our friend—has proved it.

Cha. Vane?

Hol. This day. Did Vane deliver up or no
 Those notes which, furnished by his son to Pym,
 Seal Strafford's fate? 65

Cha. Sir, as I live, I know
 Nothing that Vane has done! What treason next?
 I wash my hands of it. Vane, speak the truth!
 Ask Vane himself!

Hol. I will not speak to Vane,
 Who speak to Pym and Hampden every day. 70

Queen. Speak to Vane's master then! What gain to him
Were Strafford's death?

Hol.

Ha? Strafford cannot turn

As you, sir, sit there—bid you forth, demand

If every hateful act were not set down

In his commission?—whether you contrived

75

Or no, that all the violence should seem

His work, the gentle ways—your own,—his part,

To counteract the King's kind impulses—

While . . . but you know what he could say! And then

He might produce,—mark, sir!—a certain charge

80

To set the King's express command aside,

If need were, and be blameless. He might add . . .

Cha. Enough!

Hol.

—Who bade him break the Parliament,

Find some pretext for setting up sword-law!

Queen. Retire!

Cha.

Once more, whatever Vane dared do,

85

I know not: he is rash, a fool—I know

Nothing of Vane!

Hol.

Well—I believe you. Sir,

Believe me, in return, that . . .

[*Turning to Lady CARLISLE*]. Gentle lady,

The few words I would say, the stones might hear

Sooner than these,—I rather speak to you,

90

You, with the heart! The question, trust me, takes

Another shape, to-day: not, if the King

Or England shall succumb,—but, who shall pay

The forfeit, Strafford or his master. Sir,

You loved me once: think on my warning now!

95

[*Goes out.*]

Cha. On you and on your warning both!—*Carlisle!*

That paper!

Queen. But consider!

Cha.

Give it me!

There, signed—will that content you? Do not speak!

You have betrayed me, Vane! See! any day,

According to the tenor of that paper,

100

He bids your brother bring the army up,

Strafford shall head it and take full revenge.

Seek Strafford ! Let him have the same, before
He rises to defend himself !

Queen. In truth ?
That your shrewd Hollis should have worked a change 105
Like this ! You, late reluctant . . .

Cha. Say, Carlisle,
Your brother Percy brings the army up,
Falls on the Parliament—(I'll think of you,
My Hollis !) say, we plotted long—'t is mine,
The scheme is mine, remember ! Say, I cursed 110
Vane's folly in your hearing ! If the Earl
Does rise to do us shame, the fault shall lie
With you, Carlisle !

Lady Car. Nay, fear not me ! but still
That's a bright moment, sir, you throw away.
Tear down the veil and save him !

Queen. Go, Carlisle ! 115
Lady Car. (I shall see Strafford—speak to him : my heart
Must never beat so, then ! And if I tell
The truth ? What's gained by falsehood ? There they stand
Whose trade it is, whose life it is ! How vain
To gild such rottenness ! Strafford shall know, 120
Thoroughly know them !)

Queen. Trust to me ! [*To CARLISLE*]. Carlisle,
You seem inclined, alone of all the Court,
To serve poor Strafford : this bold plan of yours
Merits much praise, and yet . . .

Lady Car. Time presses, madam.
Queen. Yet—may it not be something premature ? 125
Strafford defends himself to-day—reserves
Some wondrous effort, one may well suppose !

Lady Car. Ay, Hollis hints as much.
Cha. Why linger then ?
Haste with the scheme—my scheme : I shall be there
To watch his look. Tell him I watch his look ! 130

Queen. Stay, we'll precede you !
Lady Car. At your pleasure.
Cha. Say—

Say, Vane is hardly ever at Whitehall !
I shall be there, remember !

Lady Car. Doubt me not.
Cha. On our return, Carlisle, we wait you here!
Lady Car. I'll bring his answer. Sir, I follow you. 135
 (Prove the King faithless, and I take away
 All Strafford cares to live for: let it be—
 'T is the King's scheme!
 My Strafford, I can save,
 Nay, I have saved you, yet am scarce content,
 Because my poor name will not cross your mind. 140
 Strafford, how much I am unworthy you!)

SCENE II.—*A passage adjoining Westminster Hall.*

Many groups of Spectators of the Trial. Officers of the Court, etc.

1st Spec. More crowd than ever! Not know Hampden,
 man?
 That's he, by Pym, Pym that is speaking now.
 No, truly, if you look so high you'll see
 Little enough of either!
2nd Spec. Stay: Pym's arm
 Points like a prophet's rod.
3rd Spec. Ay, ay, we've heard 5
 Some pretty speaking: yet the Earl escapes.
4th Spec. I fear it: just a foolish word or two
 About his children—and we see, forsooth,
 Not England's foe in Strafford, but the man
 Who, sick, half-blind . . .
2nd Spec. What's that Pym's saying now 10
 Which makes the curtains flutter? look! A hand
 Clutches them. Ah! The King's hand!
5th Spec. I had thought
 Pym was not near so tall. What said he, friend?
2nd Spec. "Nor is this way a novel way of blood,"
 And the Earl turns as if to . . . look! look! 15
Many Spectators. There!
 What ails him? no—he rallies, see—goes on
 And Strafford smiles. Strange!
An Officer. Haselrig!

Many Spectators. Friend? Friend?

The Officer. Lost, utterly lost: just when we looked for Pym

To make a stand against the ill effects
Of the Earl's speech! Is Haselrig without? 20
Pym's message is to him.

3rd Spec. Now, said I true?
Will the Earl leave them yet at fault or no?

1st Spec. Never believe it, man! These notes of Vane's
Ruin the Earl.

5th Spec. A brave end: not a whit
Less firm, less Pym all over. Then, the trial 25
Is closed. No—Strafford means to speak again?

An Officer. Stand back, there!
5th Spec. Why, the Earl is coming hither!
Before the court breaks up! His brother, look,—
You 'd say he 'd deprecated some fierce act
In Strafford's mind just now.

An Officer. Stand back, I say! 30
2nd Spec. Who's the veiled woman that he talks with?

Many Spectators. Hush—
The Earl! the Earl!

[*Enter STRAFFORD, SLINGSBY and other Secretaries, HOLLIS, Lady CARLISLE, MAXWELL, BALFOUR, etc.* STRAFFORD converses with Lady CARLISLE.

Hol. So near the end! Be patient—
Return!

Straf. [*To his Secretaries*]. Here—anywhere—or, 't is
freshest here!

To spend one's April here, the blossom-month! 35
Set it down here! [*They arrange a table, papers, etc.*

So, Pym can quail, can cower
Because I glance at him, yet more 's to do?

What 's to be answered, Slingsby? Let us end!

[*To Lady CARLISLE.*] Child, I refuse his offer; whatsoever
It be! Too late! Tell me no word of him! 40

'T is something, Hollis, I assure you that—
To stand, sick as you are, some eighteen days

Fighting for life and fame against a pack
 Of very curs, that lie through thick and thin,
 Eat flesh and bread by wholesale, and can't say
 "Strafford" if it would take my life! 45

Lady Car. Be moved!
 Glance at the paper!

Straf. Already at my heels!
 Pym's faulting bloodhounds scent the track again.
 Peace, child! Now, Slingsby!

[Messengers from LANE and other of STRAFFORD'S Counsel
 within the Hall are coming and going during the Scene.]

Straf. [setting himself to write and dictate.] I shall beat you,
 Hollis: 50

Do you know that? In spite of St. John's tricks,
 In spite of Pym—your Pym who shrank from me!
 Eliot would have contrived it otherwise.

[To a Messenger.] In truth? This slip, tell Lane, contains as
 much 55

As I can call to mind about the matter.
 Eliot would have disdained . . .

[Calling after the Messenger.] And Radcliffe, say,
 The only person who could answer Pym,
 Is safe in prison, just for that.

Well, well!
 It had not been recorded in that case,
 I baffled you.

[To Lady CARLISLE.] Nay, child, why look so grieved? 60
 All's gained without the King! You saw Pym quail?
 What shall I do when they acquit me, think you,

But tranquilly resume my task as though
 Nothing had intervened since I proposed
 To call that traitor to account! Such tricks, 65

Trust me, shall not be played a second time,
 Not even against Laud, with his grey hair—
 Your good work, Hollis! Peace! To make amends,
 You, Lucy, shall be here when I impeach
 Pym and his fellows.

Hol. Wherefore not protest 70
 Against our whole proceeding, long ago?

Why feel indignant now? Why stand this while
Enduring patiently?

Straf. Child, I'll tell you—
You, and not Pym—you, the slight graceful girl,
Tall for a flowering lily, and not Hollis— 75
Why I stood patient! I was fool enough
To see the will of England in Pym's will;
To fear myself had wronged her, and to wait
Her judgment: when, behold in place of it . . .

[*To a Messenger who whispers.*] Tell Lane to answer no
such question! Law,— 80

I grapple with their law! I'm here to try
My actions by their standard, not my own!
Their law allowed that levy: what's the rest
To Pym, or Lane, any but God and me?

Lady Car. The King's so weak! Secure this chance!
'T was Vane, 85

Never forget, who furnished Pym the notes . . .

Straf. Fit,—very fit, those precious notes of Vane,
To close the Trial worthily! I feared
Some spice of nobleness might linger yet
And spoil the character of all the past. 90
Vane eased me . . . and I will go back and say
As much—to Pym, to England! Follow me!
I have a word to say! There, my defence
Is done!

Stay! why be proud? Why care to own
My gladness, my surprise?—Nay, not surprise! 95

Wherefore insist upon the little pride
Of doing all myself, and sparing him
The pain? Child, say the triumph is my King's!
When Pym grew pale, and trembled, and sank down,
One image was before me: could I fail? 100

Child, care not for the past, so indistinct,
Obscure—there's nothing to forgive in it
'T is so forgotten! From this day begins
A new life, founded on a new belief
In Charles.

Hol. In Charles? Rather believe in Pym? 105
And here he comes in proof! Appeal to Pym!

Say how unfair . . .

Straf. To Pym? I would say nothing!
I would not look upon Pym's face again.

Lady Car. Stay, let me have to think I pressed your hand!
[STRAFFORD and his friends go out.]

Enter HAMPDEN and VANE.

Vane. O Hampden, save the great misguided man! 110
Plead Strafford's cause with Pym! I have remarked
He moved no muscle when we all declaimed
Against him: you had but to breathe—he turned
Those cold calm eyes upon you.

[*Enter Pym, the Solicitor-General St. JOHN, the Managers
of the Trial, FIENNES, RUDYARD, etc.*]

Rud. Horrible!
Till now all hearts were with you: I withdraw 115
For one. Too horrible! But we mistake
Your purpose, Pym: you cannot snatch away
The last spar from the drowning man.

Fien. He talks
With St. John of it—see, how quietly!
[*To other PRESBYTERIANS.*] You'll join us? Strafford may
deserve the worst: 120
But this new course is monstrous. Vane, take heart!
This Bill of his Attainder shall not have
One true man's hand to it.

Vane. Consider, Pym!
Confront your Bill, your own Bill: what is it?
You cannot catch the Earl on any charge,— 125
No man will say the law has hold of him
On any charge; and therefore you resolve
To take the general sense on his desert,
As though no law existed, and we met
To found one. You refer to Parliament 130
To speak its thought upon the abortive mass
Of half-borne-out assertions, dubious hints
Hereafter to be cleared, distortions—ay,
And wild inventions. Every man is saved
The task of fixing any single charge 135

On Strafford : he has but to see in him
The enemy of England.

Pym. A right scruple.
I have heard some called England's enemy
With less consideration.

Vane. Pity me !
Indeed you made me think I was your friend ! 140
I who have murdered Strafford, how remove
That memory from me ?

Pym. I absolve you, Vane.
Take you no care for aught that you have done !

Vane. John Hampden, not this Bill ! Reject this Bill !
He staggers through the ordeal : let him go, 145
Strew no fresh fire before him ! Plead for us !
When Strafford spoke, your eyes were thick with tears !

Hamp. England speaks louder : who are we, to play
The generous pardoner at her expense,
Magnanimously waive advantages, 150
And, if he conquer us, applaud his skill ?

Vane. He was your friend.

Pym. I have heard that before.

Fien. And England trusts you.

Hamp. Shame be his, who turns
The opportunity of serving her
She trusts him with, to his own mean account— 155
Who would look nobly frank at her expense !

Fien. I never thought it could have come to this.

Pym. But I have made myself familiar, Fiennes,
With this one thought—have walked, and sat, and slept,
This thought before me. I have done such things, 160
Being the chosen man that should destroy
The traitor. You have taken up this thought
To play with, for a gentle stimulant,
To give a dignity to idler life
By the dim prospect of emprise to come, 165
But ever with the softening, sure belief,
That all would end some strange way right at last.

Fien. Had we made out some weightier charge !

Pym. You say
That these are petty charges : can we come

To the real charge at all? There he is safe 170
 In tyranny's stronghold. Apostasy
 Is not a crime, treachery not a crime:
 The cheek burns, the blood tingles, when you speak
 The words, but where 's the power to take revenge
 Upon them? We must make occasion serve,— 175
 The oversight shall pay for the main sin
 That mocks us.

Rud. But this unexampled course,
 This Bill!

Pym. By this, we roll the clouds away
 Of precedent and custom, and at once 180
 Bid the great beacon-light God sets in all,
 The conscience of each bosom, shine upon
 The guilt of Strafford: each man lay his hand
 Upon his breast, and judge!

Vane. I only see
 Strafford, nor pass his corpse for all beyond!

Rud. and others. Forgive him! He would join us, now
 he finds 185
 What the King counts reward! The pardon, too,
 Should be your own. Yourself should bear to Strafford
 The pardon of the Commons.

Pym. Meet him? Strafford?
 Have we to meet once more, then? Be it so!
 And yet the prophecy seemed half fulfilled 190
 When, at the Trial, as he gazed, my youth,
 Our friendship, divers thoughts came back at once
 And left me, for a time . . . 'T is very sad!
 To-morrow we discuss the points of law
 With Lane—to-morrow?

Vane. Not before to-morrow— 195
 So, time enough! I knew you would relent!

Pym. The next day, Haselrig, you introduce
 The Bill of his Attainder. Pray for me!

SCENE III.—*Whitehall.**The KING.*

Cha. My loyal servant! To defend himself
Thus irresistibly,—withholding aught
That seemed to implicate us!

We have done
Less gallantly by Strafford. Well, the future
Must recompense the past.

She tarries long. 5
I understand you, Strafford, now!

The scheme—
Carlisle's mad scheme—he'll sanction it, I fear,
For love of me. 'T was too precipitate:
Before the army's fairly on its march,
He'll be at large: no matter.

Well, Carlisle? 10

Enter Pym.

Pym. Fear me not, sir:—my mission is to save,
This time.

Cha. To break thus on me! Unannounced.

Pym. It is of Strafford I would speak.

Cha. No more
Of Strafford! I have heard too much from you.

Pym. I spoke, sir, for the People; will you hear 15
A word upon my own account?

Cha. Of Strafford?
(So turns the tide already? Have we tamed
The insolent brawler?—Strafford's eloquence
Is swift in its effect.) Lord Strafford, sir,
Has spoken for himself.

Pym. Sufficiently. 20
I would apprise you of the novel course
The People take: the Trial fails.

Cha. Yes, yes:
We are aware, sir: for your part in it
Means shall be found to thank you.

Pym. Pray you, read

- This schedule! I would learn from your own mouth 25
 —(It is a matter much concerning me)—
 Whether, if two Estates of us concede
 The death of Strafford, on the grounds set forth
 Within that parchment, you, sir, can resolve
 To grant your own consent to it. This Bill 30
 Is framed by me. If you determine, sir,
 That England's manifested will may guide
 Your judgment, ere another week such will
 Shall manifest itself. If not,—I cast
 Aside the measure.
- Cha.* You can hinder, then, 35
 The introduction of this Bill?
- Pym.* I can.
- Cha.* He is my friend, sir: I have wronged him: mark
 you,
 Had I not wronged him, this might be. You think,
 Because you hate the Earl . . . (turn not away,
 We know you hate him)—no one else could love 40
 Strafford: but he has saved me, some affirm.
 Think of his pride! And do you know one strange,
 One frightful thing? We all have used the man
 As though a drudge of ours, with not a source
 Of happy thoughts except in us; and yet 45
 Strafford has wife and children, household cares,
 Just as if we had never been. Ah, sir,
 You are moved, even you, a solitary man
 Wed to your cause—to England, if you will! 49
- Pym.* Yes—think, my soul—to England! Draw not back!
- Cha.* Prevent this Bill, sir! All your course seems fair
 Till now. Why, in the end, 't is I should sign
 The warrant for his death! You have said much
 I ponder on; I never meant, indeed,
 Strafford should serve me any more. I take 55
 The Commons' counsel; but this Bill is yours—
 Not worthy of its leader; care not, sir,
 For that, however! I will quite forget
 You named it to me. You are satisfied?
- Pym.* Listen to me, sir! Eliot laid his hand, 60
 Wasted and white, upon my forehead once;

Wentworth—he 's gone now !—has talked on, whole nights,
 And I beside him ; Hampden loves me : sir,
 How can I breathe and not wish England well,
 And her King well ?

65

Cha. I thank you, sir, who leave
 That King his servant. Thanks, sir !

Pym. Let me speak !
 —Who may not speak again ; whose spirit yearns
 For a cool night after this weary day :

—Who would not have my soul turn sicker yet
 In a new task, more fatal, more august,
 More full of England's utter weal or woe.

70

I thought, sir, could I find myself with you,
 After this Trial, alone, as man to man—
 I might say something, warn you, pray you, save—
 Mark me, King Charles, save—you !

But God must do it. Yet I warn you, sir—
 (With Strafford's faded eyes yet full on me)

75

As you would have no deeper question moved
 —“ How long the Many must endure the One—”
 Assure me, sir, if England give assent
 To Strafford's death, you will not interfere !
 Or——

80

Cha. God forsakes me. I am in a net
 And cannot move. Let all be as you say !

Enter Lady CARLISLE.

Lady Car. He loves you—looking beautiful with joy
 Because you sent me ! he would spare you all

85

The pain ! he never dreamed you would forsake
 Your servant in the evil day—nay, see
 Your scheme returned ! That generous heart of his !
 He needs it not—or, needing it, disdains
 A course that might endanger you—you, sir,
 Whom Strafford from his inmost soul . . .

90

[*Seeing Pym.*] Well met !
 No fear for Strafford ! All that 's true and brave
 On your own side shall help us : we are now
 Stronger than ever.

Ha—what, sir, is this ?

All is not well ! What parchment have you there ? 95

Pym. Sir, much is saved us both.

Lady Car. This Bill ! Your lip

Whitens—you could not read one line to me

Your voice would falter so !

Pym. No recreant yet !

The great word went from England to my soul,

And I arose. The end is very near. 100

Lady Car. I am to save him ! All have shrunk besides ;

'T is only I am left. Heaven will make strong

The hand now as the heart. Then let both die !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Whitehall.*

HOLLIS, Lady CARLISLE.

Hol. Tell the King, then ! Come in with me !

Lady Car. Not so !

He must not hear till it succeeds.

Hol. Succeed ?

No dream was half so vain—you 'd rescue Strafford

And outwit Pym ! I cannot tell you . . . lady,

The block pursues me, and the hideous show. 5

To-day . . . is it to-day ? And all the while

He 's sure of the King's pardon. Think, I have

To tell this man he is to die. The King

May rend his hair, for me ! I 'll not see Strafford !

Lady Car. Only, if I succeed, remember—Charles 10

Has saved him. He would hardly value life

Unless his gift. My staunch friends wait. Go in—

You must go in to Charles !

Hol. And all beside

Left Strafford long ago. The King has signed

The warrant for his death ! The Queen was sick 15

Of the eternal subject. For the Court,—

The Trial was amusing in its way,

Only, too much of it : the Earl withdrew
 In time. But you, fragile, alone, so young,
 Amid rude mercenaries—you devise
 A plan to save him ! Even though it fails,
 What shall reward you ?

Lady Car. I may go, you think,
 To France with him ? And you reward me, friend,
 Who lived with Strafford even from his youth
 Before he set his heart on state-affairs
 And they bent down that noble brow of his.
 I have learned somewhat of his latter life,
 And all the future I shall know : but, Hollis,
 I ought to make his youth my own as well.
 Tell me,——when he is saved !

Hol. My gentle friend,
 He should know all and love you, but 't is vain !

Lady Car. Love ? no—too late now ! Let him love the
 King !

'T is the King's scheme ! I have your word, remember !
 We 'll keep the old delusion up. But quick !
 Quick ! Each of us has work to do, beside.
 Go to the King ! I hope—Hollis—I hope !
 Say nothing of my scheme ! Hush, while we speak
 Think where he is ! Now for my gallant friends !

Hol. Where is he ? Calling wildly upon Charles,
 Guessing his fate, pacing the prison-floor.
 Let the King tell him ! I 'll not look on Strafford.

SCENE II.—*The Tower.*

STRAFFORD *sitting with his Children.* *They sing.*

*O bell' andare
 Per barca in mare,
 Verso la sera
 Di Primavera !*

William. The boat's in the broad moonlight all this
 while—

Verso la sera
Di Primavera!

And the boat shoots from underneath the moon
Into the shadowy distance ; only, still
You hear the dipping oar—

Verso la sera,

10

And faint, and fainter, and then all 's quite gone,
Music and light and all, like a lost star.

Anne. But you should sleep, father : you were to sleep.

Straf. I do sleep, Anne ; or if not—you must know,
There 's such a thing as . . .

Wil. You 're too tired to sleep ? 15

Straf. It will come by-and-by and all day long,
In that old quiet house I told you of :
We sleep safe there.

Anne. Why not in Ireland ?

Straf. No !

Too many dreams !—That song 's for Venice, William.

You know how Venice looks upon the map—

20

Isles that the mainland hardly can let go ?

Wil. You 've been to Venice, father ?

Straf. I was young, then.

Wil. A city with no King ; that 's why I like
Even a song that comes from Venice.

Straf. William !

Wil. Oh, I know why ! Anne, do you love the King ?
But I 'll see Venice for myself one day.

25

Straf. See many lands, boy—England last of all,—
That way you 'll love her best.

Wil. Why do men say

You sought to ruin her, then ?

Straf. Ah,—they say that.

Wil. Why ?

Straf. I suppose they must have words to say,
As you to sing.

30

Anne. But they make songs beside !
Last night I heard one, in the street beneath,
That called you . . . Oh, the names !

Wil. Don't mind her, father !

They soon left off when I cried out to them.

Straf. We shall so soon be out of it, my boy ! 35

'T is not worth while : who heeds a foolish song ?

Wil. Why, not the King.

Straf. Well : it has been the fate

Of better ; and yet,—wherefore not feel sure

That time, which in the twilight comes to mend

All the fantastic day's caprice, consign 40

To the low ground once more the ignoble Term,

And raise the Genius on his orb again,—

That time will do me right ?

Anne. (Shall we sing, William ?

He does not look thus when we sing.)

Straf. For Ireland,

Something is done : too little, but enough 45

To show what might have been.

Wil. (I have no heart

To sing now ! Anne, how very sad he looks !

Oh, I so hate the King, for all he says !)

Straf. Forsook them ! What, the common songs will run

That I forsook the People ? Nothing more ? 50

Ay, Fame, the busy scribe, will pause, no doubt,

Turning a deaf ear to her thousand slaves

Noisy to be enrolled,—will register

The curious glosses, subtle notices,

Ingenious clearings-up one fain would see 55

Beside that plain inscription of The Name—

The Patriot Pym, or the Apostate Strafford !

[*The Children resume their song timidly, but break off.*

Enter HOLLIS and an Attendant.

Straf. No,—Hollis ? in good time !—Who is he ?

Hol. One

That must be present.

Straf. Ah—I understand.

They will not let me see poor Laud alone. 60

How politic ! They'd use me by degrees

To solitude : and, just as you came in,

I was solicitous what life to lead

When Strafford's "not so much as Constable

"In the King's service." Is there any means
To keep one's self awake? What would you do
After this bustle, Hollis, in my place?

Hol. Strafford!

Straf. Observe, not but that Pym and you
Will find me news enough—news I shall hear
Under a quince-tree by a fish-pond side
At Wentworth. Garrard must be re-engaged
My newsman. Or, a better project now!
What if, when all's consummated, and the Saints
Reign, and the Senate's work goes swimmingly,—
What if I venture up, some day, unseen,
To saunter through the Town, notice how Pym,
Your Tribune, likes Whitehall, drop quietly
Into a tavern, hear a point discussed,
As, whether Strafford's name were John or James—
And be myself appealed to—I, who shall
Myself have near forgotten!

Hol. I would speak . . .

Straf. Then you shall speak,—not now. I want, just now,
To hear the sound of my own tongue. This place
Is full of ghosts.

Hol. Nay, you must hear me, Strafford!

Straf. Oh, readily! Only, one rare thing more,—
The minister! Who will advise the King,
Turn his Sejanus, Richelieu and what not,
And yet have health—children, for aught I know!
My patient pair of traitors! Ah,—but, William—
Does not his cheek grow thin?

Wil. 'Tis you look thin,
Father!

Straf. A scamper o'er the breezy wolds
Sets all to-rights.

Hol. You cannot sure forget
A prison-roof is o'er you, Strafford?

Straf. No,
Why, no. I would not touch on that, the first.
I left you that. Well, Hollis! Say at once,
The King can find no time to set me free!
A masque at Theobald's?

- Hol.* Hold: no such affair
 Detains him.
- Straf.* True: what needs so great a matter?
 The Queen's lip may be sore. Well: when he pleases,—
 Only, I want the air: it vexes flesh 100
 To be pent up so long.
- Hol.* The King—I bear
 His message, Strafford: pray you, let me speak!
Straf. Go, William! Anne, try o'er your song again!
 [*The Children retire.*]
- They shall be loyal, friend, at all events.
 I know your message: you have nothing new 105
 To tell me: from the first I guessed as much.
 I know, instead of coming here himself,
 Leading me forth in public by the hand,
 The King prefers to leave the door ajar
 As though I were escaping—bids me trudge 110
 While the mob gapes upon some show prepared
 On the other side of the river! Give at once
 His order of release! I've heard, as well,
 Of certain poor manœuvres to avoid
 The granting pardon at his proper risk; 115
 First, he must prattle somewhat to the Lords,
 Must talk a trifle with the Commons first,
 Be grieved I should abuse his confidence,
 And far from blaming them, and . . . Where's the order?
Hol. Spare me!
Straf. Why, he'd not have me steal away? 120
 With an old doublet and a steeple hat
 Like Prynne's? Be smuggled into France, perhaps?
 Hollis, 'tis for my children! 'T was for them
 I first consented to stand day by day
 And give your Puritans the best of words, 125
 Be patient, speak when called upon, observe
 Their rules, and not return them prompt their lie!
 What's in that boy of mine that he should prove
 Son to a prison-breaker? I shall stay,
 And he'll stay with me. Charles should know as much: 130
 He too has children!
 [*Turning to HOLLIS' companion.*] Sir, you feel for me!

No need to hide that face ! Though it have looked
 Upon me from the judgment-seat . . . I know
 Strangely, that somewhere it has looked on me . . . 135
 Your coming has my pardon, nay, my thanks :
 For there is one who comes not.

Hol. Whom forgive,

As one to die !

Straf. True, all die, and all need

Forgiveness : I forgive him from my soul.

Hol. 'T is a world's wonder : Strafford, you must die !

Straf. Sir, if your errand is to set me free 140

This heartless jest mars much. Ha ! Tears in truth ?

We'll end this ! See this paper, warm—feel—warm

With lying next my heart ! Whose hand is plain ?

Whose promise ? Read, and loud for God to hear !

“ Strafford shall take no hurt ”—read it, I say ! 145

“ In person, honour, nor estate.”

Hol. The King . . .

Straf. I could unking him by a breath ! You sit

Where Loudon sat, who came to prophesy

The certain end, and offer me Pym's grace

If I'd renounce the King : and I stood firm 150

On the King's faith. The King who lives . . .

Hol. To sign

The warrant for your death.

Straf. “ Put not your trust

“ In princes, neither in the sons of men,

“ In whom is no salvation ! ”

Hol. Trust in God !

The scaffold is prepared : they wait for you ; 155

He has consented. Cast the earth behind !

CHARLES. You would not see me, Strafford, at your foot !

It was wrung from me ! Only curse me not !

Hol. [*To STRAFFORD.*] As you hope grace and pardon in
 your need,

Be merciful to this most wretched man ! 160

[*Voices from within.*]

Verso la sera

Di Primavera.

Straf. You'll be good to those children, sir ? I know

You 'll not believe her, even should the Queen
 Think they take after one they rarely saw. 165
 I had intended that my son should live
 A stranger to these matters : but you stand
 So utterly deprived of friends ! He too
 Must serve you—will you not be good to him ?
 Or, stay, sir, do not promise—do not swear ! 170
 You, Hollis, do the best you can for me !
 I've not a soul to trust to : Wandesford 's dead,
 And you 've got Radcliffe safe, Laud's turn comes next.
 I've found small time of late for my affairs,
 But I trust any of you, Pym himself— 175
 No one could hurt them : there 's an infant, too.
 These tedious cares ! Your Majesty could spare them !
 Nay—pardon me, my King ! I had forgotten
 Your education, trials, much temptation,
 Some weakness : there escaped a peevish word : 180
 'T is gone : I bless you at the last. You know,
 All 's between you and me : what has the world
 To do with it ? Farewell !

Cha. [at the door.] Balfour ! Balfour !

Enter BALFOUR.

The Parliament !—go to them : I grant all
 Demands. Their sittings shall be permanent : 185
 Tell them to keep their money if they will ;
 I 'll come to them for every coat I wear
 And every crust I eat : only, I choose
 To pardon Strafford :—as the Queen shall choose !
 —She never heard the People howl for blood, 190
 Beside !

Bal. Your Majesty may hear them now :
 The walls can hardly keep their murmurs out :
 Please you retire !

Cha. Take all the troops, Balfour !

Bal. There are some hundred thousand of the crowd.

Cha. Come with me, Strafford ! You 'll not fear, at least !

Straf. Balfour, say nothing to the world of this ! 196

I charge you, as a dying man, forget
 You gazed upon this agony of one . . .

Of one . . . or if . . . why, you may say, Balfour,
 The King was sorry : 't is no shame in him ; 200
 Yes, you may say he even wept, Balfour,
 And that I walked the lighter to the block
 Because of it. I shall walk lightly, sir !
 Earth fades, heaven breaks on me :—I shall stand next
 Before God's throne. The moment 's close at hand 205
 When man,—the first, last time,—has leave to lay
 His whole heart bare before its Maker, leave
 To clear up the long error of a life
 And choose one happiness for evermore.
 With all mortality about me, Charles, 210
 The sudden wreck, the dregs of violent death—
 What if, despite the opening angel-song,
 There penetrate one prayer for you ? Be saved
 Through me ! Bear witness, no one could prevent
 My death ! Lead on ! ere he awake—best, now ! 215
 All must be ready : did you say, Balfour,
 The crowd began to murmur ? They 'll be kept
 Too late for sermon at St. Antholin's !
 Now ! But tread softly—children are at play
 In the next room. Precede ! I follow— 220

Enter Lady CARLISLE, with many Attendants.

Lady Car.

Me !

Follow me, Strafford, and be saved ! The King ?
 [*To the KING.*] Well—as you ordered, they are ranged
 without,

The convoy . . . [*seeing the KING's state.*]

[*To STRAFFORD.*] You know all, then ! Why, I thought
 It looked best that the King should save you,—Charles
 Alone ; 't is a shame that you should owe me aught. 225
 Or no, not shame ! Strafford, you 'll not feel shame
 At being saved by me ?

Hol.

All true ! Oh Strafford,

She saves you ! all her deed—this lady's deed !
 And is the boat in readiness ? You, friend,
 Are Billingsley, no doubt ! Speak to her, Strafford ! 230
 See how she trembles, waiting for your voice !
 The world 's to learn its bravest story yet !

Lady Car. Talk afterward! Long nights in France
enough,

To sit beneath the vines and talk of home.

Straf. You love me, child? Ah, Strafford can be loved 235
As well as Vane! I could escape, then?

Lady Car. Haste!

Advance the torches, Bryan!

Straf. I will die.

They call me proud: but England had no right,
When she encountered me—her strength to mine—
To find the chosen foe a craven. Girl, 240
I fought her to the utterance, I fell,
I am hers now, and I will die. Beside,
The lookers on! Eliot is all about
This place, with his most uncomplaining brow.

Lady Car. Strafford!

Straf. I think if you could know how much 245
I love you, you would be repaid, my friend!

Lady Car. Then, for my sake!

Straf. Even for your sweet sake,
I stay.

Hol. For *their* sake!

Straf. To bequeath a stain?
Leave me! Girl, humour me and let me die! 250

Lady Car. Bid him escape—wake, King! Bid him escape!

Straf. True, I will go! Die, and forsake the King?
I'll not draw back from the last service.

Lady Car. Strafford!

Straf. And, after all, what is disgrace to me?
Let us come, child! That it should end this way! 255
Lead, then! but I feel strangely: it was not
To end this way.

Lady Car. Lean—lean on me!

Straf. My King!
Oh, had he trusted me—his "friend of friends!"

Lady Car. I can support him, Hollis!

Straf. Not this way!
This gate—I dreamed of it—this very gate. 260

Lady Car. It opens on the river: our good boat
Is moored below, our friends are there.

Straf. The same :
Only with something ominous and dark,
Fatal, inevitable.

Lady Car. Strafford! Strafford!

Straf. Not by this gate! I feel what will be there! 265
I dreamed of it, I tell you: touch it not!

Lady Car. To save the King,—Strafford, to save the
King!

[*As STRAFFORD opens the door, PYM is discovered with
HAMDEN, VANE, etc. STRAFFORD falls back: PYM fol-
lows slowly and confronts him.*

Pym. Have I done well? Speak, England! Whose sole
sake

I still have laboured for, with disregard
To my own heart,—for whom my youth was made 270
Barren, my manhood waste, to offer up
Her sacrifice—this friend, this Wentworth here—
Who walked in youth with me, loved me, it may be,
And whom, for his forsaking England's cause,
I hunted by all means (trusting that she 275
Would sanctify all means) even to the block
Which waits for him. And, saying this, I feel
No bitterer pang than first I felt, the hour
I swore that Wentworth might leave us, but I
Would never leave him: I do leave him now. 280
I render up my charge (be witness, God!)
To England who imposed it. I have done
Her bidding—poorly, wrongly,—it may be,
With ill effects—for I am weak, a man:
Still, I have done my best, my human best, 285
Not faltering for a moment. It is done.
And this said, if I say . . . , yes, I will say
I never loved but one man—David not
More Jonathan! Even thus I love him now:
And look for my chief portion in that world 290
Where great hearts led astray are turned again,—
(Soon it may be, and, certes, will be soon:
My mission over, I shall not live long.)—
Ay, here I know I talk—I dare and must,

Of England, and her great reward, as all 295
 I look for there ; but in my inmost heart,
 Believe, I think of stealing quite away
 To walk once more with Wentworth—my youth's friend
 Purged from all error, gloriously renewed,
 And Eliot shall not blame us. Then indeed . . . 300
 This is no meeting, Wentworth ! Tears increase
 Too hot. A thin mist—is it blood ?—enwraps
 The face I loved once. Then, the meeting be !
Straf. I have loved England too ; we 'll meet then, Pym.
 As well die now. Youth is the only time 305
 To think and to decide on a great course :
 Manhood with action follows ; but 't is dreary,
 To have to alter our whole life in age—
 The time past, the strength gone ! As well die now.
 When we meet, Pym, I 'd be set right—not now ! 310
 Best die. Then if there 's any fault, fault too
 Dies, smothered up. Poor grey old little Laud
 May dream his dream out, of a perfect Church,
 In some blind corner. And there 's no one left.
 I trust the King now wholly to you, Pym ! 315
 And yet, I know not : I shall not be there :
 Friends fail—if he have any. And he 's weak,
 And loves the Queen, and . . . Oh, my fate is nothing—
 Nothing ! But not that awful head—not that !
Pym. If England shall declare such will to me . . . 320
Straf. Pym, you help England ! I, that am to die,
 What I must see ! 't is here—all here ! My God,
 Let me but gasp out, in one word of fire,
 How thou wilt plague him, satiating hell !
 What ? England that you help, become through you, 325
 A green and putrefying charnel, left
 Our children . . . some of us have children, Pym—
 Some who, without that, still must ever wear
 A darkened brow, an over-serious look,
 And never properly be young ! No word ? 330
 What if I curse you ? Send a strong curse forth
 Clothed from my heart, lapped round with horror till
 She 's fit with her white face to walk the world
 Scaring kind natures from your cause and you—

Then to sit down with you at the board-head, 335
 The gathering for prayer . . . O speak, but speak!
 . . . Creep up, and quietly follow each one home,
 You, you, you, be a nestling care for each
 To sleep with,—hardly moaning in his dreams,
 She gnaws so quietly,—till, lo he starts, 340
 Gets off with half a heart eaten away!
 Oh, shall you 'scape with less if she's my child?
 You will not say a word—to me—to Him?
Pym. If England shall declare such will to me . . .
Straf. No, not for England now, not for Heaven now,— 345
 See, Pym, for my sake, mine who kneel to you!
 There, I will thank you for the death, my friend!
 This is the meeting: let me love you well!
Pym. England,—I am thine own! Dost thou exact
 That service? I obey thee to the end. 350
Straf. O God, I shall die first! I shall die first!

NOTES.

THE action of the play occupies a year and a half, from November, 1639, to May, 1641. Browning followed the same authorities that were used for Forster's *Life of Strafford*; hence the date of November instead of September.

ACT I. — SCENE 1.

Presbyterian Party. The party to which Pym and others belonged was not, at this time, a *Presbyterian party*. It was opposed to Charles politically, and to Laud ecclesiastically. It had strongly resented recent ceremonials in which Laud had taken a most prominent part. If any member of it could at this time have been called a Presbyterian, it would have been Fiennes, second son of Lord Saye and Sele.

1-4. *Vane.* See Milton's sonnet "To Sir Henry Vane the Younger." He is the "Young Harry" of Browning's *Cavalier Tunes, I.* See that lyric also for mention of Hampden, Pym, &c.

12. *For you are his brother, Hollis.* Wentworth had married Lady Arabella, sister to Hollis.

16. *Is that so strange a thing?* Is it so unusual to hate England's foe?

18. See 1 *Sam.* xvi.

23. *Why, when the last sat, Wentworth sat with us.* For the account of Wentworth's real part in 1628, see Gardiner's *History of England*, vol. vi. p. 235.

34. *Exalting Dagon, &c.* See 1 *Sam.* v. (Expand this metaphor.)

39, &c. *To ply the scourge, &c.* A statement that would come home painfully to those who lived at this time. (How are the words *tyranny* and *agony* used here?)

51. *The bringing.* (Explain the construction here.)

52. *Power, power without law, power and blood too.* The first and third *power* are monosyllabic; the second a dissyllable. Cf. Shakespeare's—

"As fire drives out fire, so pity pity."

Julius Cæsar.

So years in *Tempest*, I. 2, 53.

57. *An obscure small room.* Historically, in Pym's house.
62. *Hamilton.* James, Marquis of Hamilton, was appointed, after the renewal of the Covenant (1638), High Commissioner in Scotland. He proclaimed the dissolution of the General Assembly when it proceeded to inquire into the conduct of the bishops. He was beheaded in 1649.
63. *The muckworm Cottington.* Francis, Lord Cottington, was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Master of the Court of Wards in the reign of Charles I. He "was swayed neither by zeal for the public good nor by scrupulous regard for justice. He would be content if only, whatever happened, the bark of his fortunes remained floating on the time . . . he was never known to do a kind action which entailed loss upon himself."—Gardiner's *History of England*, vol. viii. p. 69. (What is the force of "muckworm" here? Express what is meant, by using an adjective sentence instead of an epithet. Why is the epithet *maniac* applied to Laud?) Read *Lycidas*, ll. 103-131.
73. *One whom England loved for serving her.* Cf. ll. 201, 202.
80. *Runnymead.* (Explain this reference.)
85. *On other service.* In Ireland. (What was Wentworth's "service" there?)
89. *Renegade.* One who has *denied* his faith. Sp. *renegado*; Low Latin, *renegatus*. *Nego*, I deny. Often confounded with *runagate* = runaway. Shakspere has a verb *renege*. (*Lear*, II. 2, 84; *Ant. and Cleo.* I. 8.) And *reneging* occurs in a poem which has been attributed to Shakspere, *Passionate Pilgrim*, 251.
90. *Haman.* See the *Book of Esther*, chapters iii. to end.
- Ahitophel.* See 2 *Samuel*, xv. 31; xvi. 20, &c. (How might Wentworth have been compared to *Haman*? how to *Ahitophel*? What other statesman has been compared to *Ahitophel*? by whom? and why? Was *Haman* a "renegade"?)
101. *He brings war with him*, i.e. war against the Scots.
- 103, 104. The first hint of the end.
108. Sir John Eliot, the great Parliamentarian. He died in the Tower in 1632, of consumption, the result of the colds he had suffered from during a most harsh imprisonment.
113. *Specious*, looking well. That is, he used arguments that *looked* fair.
131. *Seven years long, &c.* See *Book of Judges*, chapters vi.-viii.
135. *The ravaged body.* "He had arranged everything for his departure (from Ireland), when one of his paroxysms of illness seized him. He wrestled with it desperately, and set sail. On landing at Chester, he wrote to Lady Wentworth a sad description of the effects of the journey

upon his gout and the 'flux' which afflicted him."—Forster's *Strafford*, 366.

147, 148. *Ay, the Court gives out, His own concerns have brought him back.* Charles had written to Wentworth in these terms: "I have . . . too much to desire your counsel and attendance for some time, which I think not fit to express by letter, more than this—the Scots' Covenant begins to spread too far. Yet, for all this, I will not have you take notice that I have sent for you, but pretend some other occasion of business."

158. *Laud's laying his religion on the Scots.* (In what sense is the word *religion* here used?)

175. *And one name.* Pym's.

179. *We have just said it, &c.* See ll. 103, 104.

184. *No Feltons.* No private assassins like Felton, who stabbed the Duke of Buckingham.

190. *Apostate.* For a complete vindication of Strafford from the charge of *apostasy*, from which indeed he was vigorously cleared in Mr. Forster's *Life*, see Gardiner's *History of England*, vol. vi. p. 338.

200. *Gracchus' death.* Both the Gracchi, Tiberius and Caius (the "jewels" of Cornelia) were prominent as "people's men," and both died the death of martyrs for the people's cause. Tiberius the elder, who seems to be the one alluded to here, was *tribune* of the people (see note to V. 277) in the year B.C. 133. Before he had offered himself for this office he had been deeply impressed with the sufferings of the poorer Roman citizens, which he traced to the unfair possession of public land by rich men. He brought in a bill to revive, with some modifications, a law that had been passed more than two hundred years previously, limiting the amount of public land to be held by any one citizen. The senators, who opposed Tiberius' election to the tribuneship for the second time, made an attack upon the people while the tribes were voting, and Tiberius was killed. Caius became tribune in 123 B.C., and carried out his brother's reforms with others still more sweeping. He fell in the year 121 B.C. See Beesly's *Gracchi, Marius and Sulla*.

213. *Aceldama.* See *Acts* i. 19.

225-234. Paraphrase. "Chose," "brought," "led," "kept," are sub-junctives.

232. *The travail of our souls*, by metonymy for the fruit of the travail. See *Isa.* liii. 11.

Something. (What part of speech here?)

234. *Regard.* Look, appearance.

242. *Remains alone.* Ellipsis of secondary subject (it or there). See note to I. 2, 126.

254. *Ship-money*. See Hist. Eng. under years 1634, &c.

256. *Where Wentworth's influence*. Wentworth's family were closely connected with the north of England. He first entered Parliament as a knight of the shire for Yorkshire. In 1628 he was made Lord President of the North.

(What do we learn from this scene of the public situation? of the character of the men introduced? Trace the line of thought by which Pym arrives at the conviction that Wentworth will once more take the people's side.) Notice the prominence of Pym in the thoughts and hopes of the people's men. Notice, too, how he does not seek to be prominent,—cares that England should be saved more than that he should be her saviour. See how Eliot "being dead yet speaketh!"

(What is the gist of this scene?)

SCENE 2.

14. *He's surely not disposed, &c.* Cf. IV., 75-8.

41. *Nibble at what you do*. Laud had said, "I have of late heard some muttering about it in Court, but can meet with nothing to fasten on; only it makes me doubt someone hath been nibbling about it."

80. *The war? They cannot have agreed to that?* Cf. II. 2, 108-110. Wentworth had written from Ireland to Charles, "If the war were with a foreign enemy, I should like well to have the first blow; but being with your Majesty's own natural, howbeit rebellious subjects, it seems to me a tender point to draw blood first; for till it come to that, all hope is not lost of reconciliation; and I would not have them with the least colour impute it to your Majesty to have put all to extremity, till their own more than words enforce you to it."

88. *Go now*. Like the French *allez donc!* an ironical encouragement addressed by Strafford, in bitterness, to himself.

89. *Forsake the people!* Cf. V. 2, 49, &c.

We must keep before us the different standpoints of Pym and Strafford. Men having the same desires and hopes may go widely different ways to realize them. Strafford had used the expression, "*Salus populi suprema lex,*" when urging the prerogative of the Crown to levy forces. This "*salus populi*" was to be, "in cases of extremity," the "*suprema lex,*" even above Acts of Parliament.

92. *Spoke*. Cf. Byron's—

"The idols are broke in the temple of Baal."

In *come* the *-n* of the strong passive participle has finally disappeared.

94. Henrietta Maria had disliked Wentworth most cordially. "It ought to be stated, to Wentworth's honour, that though he much desired to have stood well with her Majesty, he declined to purchase her favour by acts inconsistent with his own public schemes. See curious evidences of this in *Strafford Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 221, 222, 257, 329, 425, 426, &c. . . . The King himself appears to have made it a personal request of Wentworth, that he should carry himself with all duty and respect to her Majesty."—Forster's *Strafford*, note to p. 358. Browning was of course unaware of the evidence contained in the letters of Rossetti, of which no copies were in England when the play was written, but which show that about the time of the meeting of the Short Parliament she began to look to him as the saviour of her husband's cause.

96. *Weston*. Sir Richard Weston, treasurer, died 1635.

104. *One false step*. The Scots' war.

106. (Why does Wentworth say this?)

114. *We English all are mad to have a hand*. (What does this mean? What might it mean, as far as the construction goes?)

124-5. *Since we two met At Greenwich*. Cf. I. 1, 112.

126. *You cut a figure, makes some slight return, &c.* In prose English the relative when in the *nominative* case is never omitted. In poetry the aversion to lengthiness is manifested in avoiding the use of conjunctive words. See Abbott and Seeley's *English Lessons for English Readers*, 43. Browning's poetry is fuller of these ellipses than that of any other English poet.

147. *o' God's love*. *o'* here = of. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, V. 273—

"Of charity, what kin are you to me?"

See also "of all loves," *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. 1, 154, and *Othello*, III. 1, 13, where, as Wright notes, the Folios read "for love's sake" and the Quartos "of all loves."

(In what sense is *of* used here? Cf. "*of necessity*" and needs.)

159. *Your letters were the movingest*. Notice the declension of *moving*.

164-5, &c. The first time Wentworth had asked for an earldom he had asked that, in case of a refusal, Charles would keep the request a secret.

164-5, &c. *Suppose it so, the King did very well* . . . Compare with this II. 2, 130, &c.

175-6. *An obscene dream In this Ezekiel chamber*. See *Ezekiel*, viii.

208. *Mistook*. Past tense for passive participle. Frequent in Shakespearean English. See Clarendon Press note to *Macbeth*, III. 4, 109.

239. *You were best*. Originally the construction was (to) you (it) were best. Afterwards the nominative replaced the dative, as clearly

seen in "thou wert best" (*As You Like It*, I. 1.) This latter usage cannot be preferred on logical grounds.

247. *The apple of my sight*. See *Zech.* ii. 8.

261. *I will come, &c.* In a letter dated Good Friday, 1640, written at Dublin just before Strafford crossed to England for the last time, he says, "I shall cheerfully venture this crazed vessel of mine, and either, by God's help, wait upon your Majesty before the Parliament begin, or else deposit this infirm humanity of mine in the dust."

283. *He talks it smoothly*. Notice how the "it" points the half-sneer which shows that the value of Strafford's advice is already diminishing in the King's eyes.

Notice how, while to Lucy, Pym and his fellows are the Faction, to Wentworth they are Pym and the People.

(What appears to be Strafford's ruling motive? What part does Lady Carlisle play here? What do we see of the character of Charles? of the Queen?)

ACT II.—SCENE 1.

For the proceedings of the Short Parliament see Gardiner's *History of England*, vol. ix.

1. *Twelve subsidies*. A subsidy was originally a grant made by Parliament to the King "upon need and necessity." In the time of Charles I. the usage of the word is ordinarily limited to a tax levied on lands and goods. The rate was 4s. in the pound on lands and 2s. 8d. on goods, though in consequence of the insufficient value put upon estates by the Commissioners appointed for the purpose, it did not in reality amount to anything like that sum. Each subsidy at this time produced about £70,000. In its modern use the word means supplies granted by one nation to another, to assist it in the prosecution of a war.

3. *Out of the serpent's root, &c.* *Isa.* xiv. 29. (What is the force of root here?) Cf. *Lat. stirps*.

4. *Cockatrice*. A corruption of the Greek *krokódeilos*, lizard, through Latin and French. The fable of the creature's being produced from a cock's egg must be one of the numerous stories invented to account for an apparent etymology. See Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Series ii. The cockatrice and basilisk were the same. See Clarendon Press note to *Rich.* III. I. 2, 150.

34. *The Star Chamber*. (What was this Court? What was the difference between it and the Court of High Commission?)

35. *Lend them all the ears you have*. For this use of *lend*, cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. :—

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

In the earliest stages of English, *lænan* = to give. Then, to give *for a time*.

62. *Congratulate with me*. Rejoice along with me, or as in older English it might have been, Rejoice together with me.

70. *But we'll not have our Parliaments like those In Ireland*. By Sir Edward Poyning's bill, a Parliament could not be summoned more than once a year in Ireland, nor could it be summoned even then unless the Bills to be proposed to it had been approved by the English Privy Council.

72. (Expand this metaphor.)

90. *No Bishops' war*. (Why was the war with the Scots called the Bishops' war?)

(Describe exactly the part taken by Ruyard in this scene. What is his feeling as to the staunchness of the Parliament? What makes Pym certain that Strafford will rejoin the Parliamentarians?)

SCENE 2.

17. *I said, &c.* Cf. I. 2, 220, &c.

25. He had, in a fortnight, levied an army of 8,000 men.

37. *Untoward*, unlucky, unfortunate: not *toward* one's wishes, hopes, &c.

40-41. *To rush Alone upon a giant in the dark*. Cf. :—

“For I seem, dying, as one going in the dark
To fight a giant.”

Pauline.

Ll. 173, &c., and 275, 276, of this scene.

Notice in l. 99, *And you along with me*. And compare with Pym's words in IV. iii. 69-81. Contrast the motives of the two speeches.

In l. 115, we have Strafford's first open expression of his thought of Charles. Notice “So cold a heart.”

130. See Strafford's extraordinary self-command. (Why does he exercise it?)

137. *Pym's grave grey eyes*. Cf. “You know Pym's eye,” I. 1, 118. At this moment Pym has given up hope.

153. *Keep tryst*. See how *the meeting between Pym and Strafford* is dwelt on. Cf. l. 165, l. 276, III. 3, 97; V. 2, 301-304.

We have Pym and Strafford as the two antagonists: before, Pym believed that Strafford might be England's saviour; now, silently, he accepts the dread office of being the destroyer of England's foe.

158. *Fool to feign a doubt, &c.* Pym means that it is but folly for him to doubt what the end must be; but folly to affect the scrupulous and nice reserve which might belong to the man who knew himself ordained to achieve the feat of destroying England's enemy; and this because it is not he, Pym, but God Himself, who dooms Strafford. (Trace the meaning of *nice* from the derivation.)

167. Lady Carlisle has heard all. Notice Strafford's change of mood. It is perfectly true to nature; the fierce strain removed, the powers which had been braced up to the utmost state, and Strafford is poor and old and weary.

167. In "those debonair romances" all, indeed, goes well. Notice "why, the King blesses him." Think how Strafford must have felt when he said this. "Far from sure His squires are not the giant's friends." He is not sure whether those who seem to support him may not really be against him. But he will go on. It is all one, now.

167. *Sorry.* Poor.

184. *The wind that saps, &c.* (Expand into a simile.)

187. *A breed of silken creatures.* Cf. *Coriolanus*, I. 9, 45—

"Where steel grows soft as the parasite's silk."

188. *Thrive In your contempt.* While you despise them. For all that they thrive, and are powerful to do you harm.

190. *Vane's slight sneer.* Cf. II. 2, 57, &c.

193. *I give that up.* I give up caring about that.

210. Strafford's faith in the King has perished; but his purpose is unaltered, and he will go on to the death.

225. *My soul That lent from its own store, &c.* What Lady Carlisle means is, perhaps, something like this: "I expressed to Strafford the love I bore him myself as borne to him by Charles; when he loved the King, he was loving a being such as I had represented Charles to be, not such as he really was."

Observe how it had been through Lady Carlisle's representation of Charles that Strafford had grown so greatly to care for him. She had believed in him herself and drawn Strafford into a like belief. When she says, "he shall behold my soul," the unexpressed hope is, "if he sees the truth he may love me."

232. *One image, &c.* The flaw in the diamond may take the shape of some sweet face, which nature means to create some day. But however beautiful this may be in itself, it is a flaw in the diamond, which ought to be absolutely clear. This image which you think to be Charles, this "sweet face" which is not his—for you have never seen the King as he is, and this portrait in your soul is of some one who has never lived;—

this image is but a flaw in the diamond, your mind, turning blank its else imperial brilliance.

Lady Carlisle does not yet understand; she thinks that if only Strafford could recognise that he had been mistaken in Charles, he would shake off the bond that bound him to the King. She does not see that Strafford *knows the King*, and loves him still.

243. Now she understands. He loves the King, not her; but she will serve him all the same, and none the worse for that brief hope that he might love her.

246. Observe her complete change of tone. She is now apparently the woman of the world. She will not let him know that she is suffering.

257. *The George*. The badge of the Order of the Garter, St. George mounted and piercing the dragon.

259. *A masque*. The masque was a dramatic entertainment, of Italian origin; at first, it consisted of dumb-show and dancing only. The mechanical arrangements of it were often elaborate and costly. Afterwards, speeches formed part of the performance, and the highest of rank used to play in the masque. Ben Jonson wrote many masques for the Court, Inigo Jones planning the machinery, and Henry Lawes often writing the music for them. Sir Dudley Carleton describes a Court masque thus: "At night, we had the Queen's maske, in the banqueting-house, or rather the pageant. There was a great engine at the lower end of the room, which had motion, and in it were the images of sea-horses and other terrible fishes, which were ridden by Moors. The indecorum was, that there was all fish and no water. At the further end was a great shell, in form of a shallop, wherein were four seats, on which sat the Queen and her ladies. Their apparel was rich, and too light and courtesan-like for such great ones. Instead of vizards, their faces and arms were painted black, which was disguise sufficient, for they were hard to be known; but it became them nothing so well as their red and white."—Winwood's *Memorials*, ii. 44. Quoted in *Popular Encyclopædia*. The most celebrated of masques is Milton's *Comus* (not a Court-masque). Shakespere has introduced a masque into the *Tempest*.

On foot. Being arranged.

276. *Why, then, I have a foe, &c.* Cf. *Lady of the Lake*, canto iv.—

"And that stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel."

279. *Want* = lack. Cf. *Tempest*, III. 179.

"that dare not offer
What I desire to give, and much less take
What I shall die to want."

And *As You Like It*, III. 2, 20:—"He that wants money, means and content, is without three good friends."

280. *Am I not here? Not in the market-place, &c.* I am now working for the King, not for the people.

286. *Only one name*, i.e. Charles's.

291. *Until you love, &c.* You love the man and not the *representative of the people*, the recipient of love in their right. I do not love Charles as the King, but as the man whose mild voice and mournful eyes send me forth. For this allusion to Charles's personal appearance, cf. the impression produced by Vandyke's portrait.

294. *One star for guide.* This love for Charles. The words are an echo of Lady Carlisle's, l. 256; but the thought seems to be widely different.

(What does Lady Carlisle seem to mean?)

ACT III.—SCENE 1.

6. *Next Lord's-day morning.* Observe the sneer in *Lord's-day*.

12. *The new Parliament.* The Long Parliament, which met on the 3rd November, 1640.

40. *Eliot's old method.* When Charles ordered the adjournment of the House in 1629, it was under Eliot's leading that it asserted its right of self-adjournment. The Speaker, on moving to leave the chair, was forcibly held in it. Eliot plainly told him the order of the House would be sufficient to excuse him with the King. On some members then rising to leave the house, the doors were locked.

41. *The Great Duke.* Buckingham.

Note that we are to understand that these Lords have planned the "betrayal" of Strafford. The Queen sides with the Lords. The common danger is—Pym.

SCENE 2.

5. *We summoned so reluctantly, &c.* Charles had avoided summoning a Parliament until it was impossible to help it. He had tried the expedient of summoning a Council of Peers at York, but the voice of the people made itself heard, and writs were at last issued. The issue of the war with Scotland had, as it has been phrased, "dragged Charles to the people's feet."

28. *Theobalds.* The manor of Theobalds in Hertfordshire belonged

to Sir William Cecil, better known as Lord Burghley. The house which he built there was originally small, but Elizabeth paying him a visit in 1564, he enlarged the house and made fine gardens. After this, the Queen paid frequent visits to Theobalds. His son, Robert Cecil, exchanged Theobalds with James I. for Hatfield. James died at Theobalds, and it was at the court-gate that Charles was proclaimed "rightful and dubitable heir," and it was from Theobalds that he set out for the North, in March, 1642, and raised the standard at Nottingham. During the Commonwealth the palace was demolished, and the money arising from the sale of materials divided among the army. At the Restoration, the site, park, and manor were granted to the Duke of Albemarle (General Monk). For further information see a lecture by John Charles Earle, B.A. Oxon., on "The Palace of Theobalds in the Olden Time." (Hotten, 1869).

28, 29. *He must Dissolve the House.* Charles had dissolved the House that had impeached Buckingham. Compare his conduct then with his conduct now, and the position of Strafford with that of Buckingham. Waller says, in the poem entitled "Of his Majesty's receiving the News of the Duke of Buckingham's Death :"—

" The Sacred Wrestler, till a Blessing given,
Quits not his hold, but halting conquers Heav'n.
Nor was the Stream of thy Devotions stop'd
When from the Body such a Limb was lop'd
As to thy present State was no less Maim ;
Tho' thy wise Choice has since repair'd the same."

43. *Windebank.* One of the Secretaries of State.

45. *Go find.* A very common construction in older English. In our older literature editors have frequently inserted a comma between the imperative and the gerundial infinitive, thus making the construction apparently = two imperatives. In parts of England, and in Ireland, the expressions, "Go find," "Go see," &c., may still be heard. The English verb originally took *-an*, or *-ian*, as its infinitive suffix. The preposition *to* was never used except when the infinitive, used actively or passively, marked purpose, fitness, &c., and was in the dative case. When the endings *-an* and *-anne* had become weakened into *-e*, the *to* commonly preceded the ordinary infinitive as well as the other. We sometimes find the two prepositions, *for* and *to*, preceding the gerundial, and even the simple infinitive : this is found as early as the twelfth century. See Oliphant's *Old and Middle English*, p. 149. Before the ordinary infinitive, *to* is now merely an arbitrary sign, with no prepositional

force. (What English verbs omit it?) Thus, "I desire to see" = "ic wilnige ge-seón;" but, "I am here to see (or be seen)" = "ic eom hér tó ge-seónne."

48. *'Tis to the Lords they go, &c.* Pym went up to the Lords at the head of upwards of 300 representatives of the English people to impeach Strafford.

50. *Adage*. Saying, saw. Lat. *adagium*, from *ad*, to, and a word connected with *aio*, I say.

55. *Surely he will not come*. Strafford had asked for the King's permission to go to Ireland, knowing how dangerous it would be to come to London.

70. *This in question*. This being under consideration.

103. *Say it were, &c.* See note to 164, &c.

130, &c. *She knows my purpose, &c.* Lady Carlisle thinks Strafford's "purpose" is "to baffle Pym" (l. 122, &c.). When he says, "The whole of the scheme," he means, "What is my scheme? Do you really know it?" Lady Carlisle thinks he means, "What is the scheme against me? Do they connive at Pym's procedure?" When she says, "The whole is known," she means that the Queen and the Lords are acquainted with Pym's doings. Strafford and Lady Carlisle are at cross-purposes, until Strafford (l. 160) begins to speak of the ante-room's being filled with his adherents, and goes on (l. 164) to explain.

152. *Conway*. See II, 2, 9.

159. *I fell on them at Durham*. "Thwarted and exasperated on all sides, he resolved to furnish one more proof (it was destined to be the last!) of the possibility of recovering the Royal authority, by a great and vigorous exertion. During the negotiations no actual cessation of arms had been agreed to by the Scots, and he therefore secretly despatched a party of horse, under a favourite officer, to attack them in their quarters. A large body of the enemy were defeated by this manœuvre, all their officers taken prisoners, the army inspirited, and the spirit of Strafford himself restored."—Forster's *Strafford*, 378.

164. *Full proof, &c.* Clarendon says: "It was believed by some (upon what ground was never clear enough) that he made haste then to accuse the Lord Say, and some others, of having induced the Scots to invade the kingdom." There is no doubt about the matter on far better evidence than Clarendon's.

166. *Did you notice Savile?* Cf. II, 103-5.

170. *Losels, rascals*. *Lorel* is another form, *Cocke Lorel* being formerly a generic term for a very great rascal. The root is in *lose*.

171-2. *The Crew and the Cabal*. (Who are the *Crew*? who the *Cabal*? Discuss the appropriateness of these epithets.)

203. *Goring*. This Colonel Goring would have taken the lead in a plan, formed when Strafford was in the Tower, to bring the army up to London, but the other officers refused to submit to his command. See IV. 1, 100, &c.

220. *If She*, i.e. the *Queen*.

(Why does Lady Carlisle "not breathe" the "little word" to "unveil the King to Strafford?")

SCENE 3.

4. *Rufflers*. Swaggerers, bullies.

10. *Are we in Geneva?* Calvin's code of ecclesiastical and moral discipline had been established at Geneva in 1541. The sharpest vigilance was exercised over the words and actions of young and old by a tribunal composed of clergy and laity, and extremely severe penalties were enforced for divergence of opinion as well as for offences against morals.

13. *King Pym*. A nickname given to Pym by the royalists a little later on.

15. *St. John*. Oliver St. John, the Solicitor-General.

27. *Stockishness*. (Trace the meaning of the word from *stock*.)

29. *St. John's head in a charger*. See *Matt.* xiv.

41. *Pride before destruction*. *Prov.* xvi. 18.

43. *A word in season, &c.* *Prov.* xv. 23.

47. *How hath the oppressor ceased*. *Isa.* xiv. 4.

The doors, &c. "With speed he comes to the House; he calls rudely at the door; James Maxwell, keeper of the black rod, opens; his lordship, with a proud glooming countenance, makes towards his place at the board-head; but at once many bid him void the House; so he is forced, in confusion, to go to the door till he was called . . . He offered to speak, but was commanded to be gone without a word. In the outer room, James Maxwell required him, as prisoner, to deliver his sword."
—*Baillie*.

82. *Allerton*. Northallerton, in Yorkshire.

90. *He sent for me from York, My safety guaranteed*. Charles is reported to have said that *while there was a king in England, not a hair of Strafford's head should be touched by the Parliament*.

94. *Geogaw*. Bauble. Connected with *give*.

ACT IV.—SCENE 1.

The trial began on the 22nd of March, 1641.

1. *Hollis*. "The Earl of Strafford had married his sister; so, though in the Parliament he was one of the hottest men of the party, yet when that matter was before them, he always withdrew."—*Burnet*.

16. *You witness our proceedings, &c.* The King, Queen, and Court occupied one of two cabinets, made with trellis-work, and placed on either side of the seats arranged for the King and the Prince. Baillie says the King "brake down the screens with his own hands, so they sat in the eyes of all, but little more regarded than if they had been absent, for the lords sat all covered."

40. *Roof-tree*. Beam. *Tree* is here used in its old sense of *wood*. We read of vessels made of *tre*. (Expand the metaphor.)

54. "A blind moth-eaten law." Strafford said in his defence, "It is now two hundred and forty years since any man was touched for this alleged crime, to this height before myself. Let us not awaken these sleeping lions to our destructions, by taking up a few musty records that have lain by the walls so many ages, forgotten or neglected." Cf. "Another putteth the kynge in remembrance of certeine olde and moughteaten lawes that of longe tyme have not bene put in execution, whych because no man can remembre that they were made, everie man hath transgressed."—*MORRE'S Utopia*, Book I.

64. *These notes*. There were notes made by Sir Harry Vane, the elder, and headed, "A Copy of Notes taken at a Junto of the Privy Council for the Scots Affairs, about the 5th of May last." They were read by Pym in Westminster Hall on the 13th of April. "No defensive war; loss of honour and reputation. The quiet of England will hold out long. You will languish as between Saul and David. Go on with a vigorous war, as you first designed, loose and absolved from all rules of government; being reduced to extreme necessity, everything is to be done that power might admit, and that you are to do. They refusing, you are acquitted towards God and man. You have an army in Ireland you may employ here to reduce this kingdom. Confident as anything under heaven, Scotland shall not hold out five months. One summer well employed will do it. Venture all I had, I would carry it or lose it. Whether a defensive war as impossible as an offensive, or whether to let them alone."

For a discussion of the relative value of the two copies of Vane's notes, see Gardiner's *History of England*.

101. *He bids your brother bring the army up*. The Earl of Northum-

berland. There was a plot formed, originally by Sir John Suckling, to bring the army up to London, overawe the Parliament, and render the King absolute. This was to be combined with the escape of Strafford from the Tower, for which see note to V. 2, 228, &c.

128. *Ay, Hollis hints as much.* See l. 48.

(What at last determines Charles to attempt to save Strafford? What does he mean by, "You have betrayed me, Vane?" L. 99.

What seems to have been the part he really played according to the drama?)

SCENE 2.

5. *A prophet's rod.* Cf. *Ex.* iv. 20.

7-8. *Just a foolish word or two About his children.* " 'Were it not for the interest of those pledges that a saint in heaven left me, I would be loth, my lords——' For the moment he could say no more. The strong, iron-hearted man burst into tears. After a little while, he recovered himself."—*Gardiner.*

14. "*Nor is this way a novel way of blood.*" Pym's own words almost literally.

15. *And the Earl turns, &c.* Pym, suddenly turned, met Strafford's gaze fixed on him. For a moment he could not recover himself. Baillie says, "His papers he looked on, but they could not help him to a point or two, so he behaved to pass them."

17. *Haselrig.* Sir Arthur Hazlerigg's name is prominently connected with the proposal to bring in a Bill of Attainder against Strafford. Hazlerigg was one of the five members whom Charles tried to impeach in 1642.

22. *At fault.* Cf. l. 48. A dog "at fault" had lost the scent of his game.

28. *His brother.* Hollis.

35. *To spend one's April here, the blossom-month.* Read Browning's *Home-Thoughts from Abroad*, beginning—

"Oh, to be in England, now that April's there."

57. *Radcliffe.* Sir George Radcliffe had been charged by Pym with treason.

67. *Not even against Laud.* Laud had been impeached by Henry Vane the younger, and was now in the Tower.

77. *To see the will of England in Pym's will.* Cf. III. 3, 96, 97.

85. *'Twas Vane, &c.* See note to IV. 1, 65.

122. *This Bill of his Attainder.* A Bill of Attainder differs from an

Impeachment by being a legislative act, to which the consent of Crown, Lords, and Commons, is necessary, whereas, in an Impeachment the House of Commons prosecutes, and the House of Lords judges. The consequences of the passing of a Bill of Attainder are, to the attainted (Lat. *attinctus*, stained, blackened), (1) forfeiture, (2) corruption of blood, which implies that the "corrupted" person can neither inherit nor transmit lands, and (3) death.

138. *I have heard some called England's enemy.* See II. 1, 95-7.

161, 162. *Being the chosen man, &c.* Cf. II. 2, 158-60.

165. *Emprise.* Etymologically, a form of *enterprise*.

176, 177. *The oversight shall pay for the main sin.* We cannot punish the main sin, apostasy or treachery, but we must avail ourselves of any occasion to punish what is in reality, or by comparison, a mere *oversight*.

180. "My lords," Pym said, when pleading against Strafford, "we charge him with nothing but what the 'law' in every man's breast condemns, the light of nature, the light of reason, the rules of common society."

188. *Meet him.* Cf. II. 2, 168, 224.

SCENE 3.

25. *Schedule.* A list or inventory. (Through Old Fr., Lat. *schedula*, *schede*, strip of papyrus; Gr. *schizo*, something formed by *cleaving*, hence, a leaf.)

34, &c. (Is it inconsistent with Browning's conception of Pym's character, as we have followed it hitherto, that he should be represented as making this offer?)

But cf. 69-82. He sets before Charles the full danger that his refusal to give assent to the bill must bring.

37, &c. Cf. *John Inglesant*, vol. i. pp. 236-7.

54, 55. *I never meant Strafford should serve me any more.* Cf. V. 2, 64, and note.

75. This line is what is called "truncated."

ACT V.—SCENE 2.

There are many mentions of Strafford's children in letters written and received by him. See the letter to Lady Clare, written just before he left Ireland in 1639. Writing from Ireland in 1634, he tells Cottington that since he came into that kingdom he grows exceeding old and full

of grey hairs, and should wax exceeding melancholy were it not for two little girls that come now and then to play by him. The two little girls were this Ann and the younger Arabella. There is a delightful account in a letter, written to Strafford when his house in Yorkshire was being enlarged, of Mistress Ann's complaining very much of two rainy days, which, she said, hindered her from coming down, and the building from going up, because she was expected to keep her chamber, and could not overlook the workmen. This "careful steward," as the writer of the letter calls her, was then aged three!

See also the letter written to Will after Strafford's sentence had been passed.

20. *Venice*. Cf. Browning's *A Toccata of Galuppi's*.

40. *Consign To the low ground once more the ignoble Term, And raise the Genius on his orb again*. The *Term* was a statue, representing the Roman *Term*, the god who presided over boundaries. The figure was an ignoble one, with ignoble attributes. The *Genius* was the image that represented the guardian spirit who was supposed to accompany every created being from the cradle to the grave. The Roman *Genius* corresponded to the Greek *daimon genethlios*. This spirit, as the instigator of a man's actions, was a representative of his main endeavour. The *Genius* of a male person was represented as a beautiful boy, with a chlamys on his shoulders, and with the wings of a bird. The *Juno*, or *Genius* of a female, was represented as a maiden, draped, and with the wings of a bat or moth. In Mr. Browning's own words, "Suppose the enemies of a man to have thrown down the image and replaced it by a mere *Term*, and you have what I put into Strafford's head." "Putting the *Genius* on the pedestal usurped by the *Term* means—or tries to mean—substituting eventually, the true notion of Strafford's endeavour and performance in the world, for what he conceives to be the ignoble and distorted conception of these by his contemporary judges." There are many allusions in Shakespere to the *Genius*, e.g. *Ant. & Cleo.* II. 3, 19:

"Thy demon, that's thy spirit, which keeps thee."

See also *Twelfth Night*, III. 4, 142; *Julius Caesar*, II. 1, 166; *Macbeth*, III. 1, 56.

54. *Glosses*. Comments.

64. *Not so much as Constable*. In petitioning the Parliament on Strafford's behalf, Charles said, "I must confess, for matter of misdemeanours, I am so clear in that, that though I will not chalk out the way, yet let me tell you, that I do think my Lord Strafford is not fit hereafter to serve me or the Commonwealth in any place of trust, no, not so much as that of a constable."

71. *Garrard must be re-engaged My newsman.* Garrard was a clergyman who, when Wentworth went to Ireland as Lord-Deputy in 1633, was instructed "to furnish him, in monthly packets of news, with all the private scandal, and rumours, and secret affairs, of the Court and of London generally."

73. *Consummated.* Scan this line thus :

Whät if | when äll 's | consūm | mated änd | the Saints.

77. *Tribune.* The Roman *tribunes* were officers elected from among the people to defend their rights against the Patricians. See *Coriolanus*.

87. *Sejanus.* The unscrupulous minister of the Emperor Tiberius. His story furnished Ben Jonson with material for the tragedy that goes by his name.

16. Richelieu. The prime-minister of Louis XIII. It has been said of him that he "raised the power of the sovereign in France to its highest pitch."

122. *Like Prynne's.* William Prynne, whose name is chiefly known as that of the writer of *Histrio-Mastix, or the Players' Scourge*, in which there were some reflections on women actors which were construed into an attack on the Queen; in consequence of which, Prynne suffered horrible punishment.

131. *He too has children.* Cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 3, 217: "He has no children."

145. *Strafford shall take no hurt.* Charles's words were, "Upon the word of a King, you shall not suffer in life, honour, or fortune."

151-2. Cf. *John Inglesant*, vol. i. 123.

152. *Put not your trust, &c.* Strafford's words when he was told that the King had assented to the bill. They are taken from *Psalm* cxlvi. 3.

172. *Wandesford's dead.* Sir Christopher Wandesford, Master of the Rolls and Privy Councillor in Ireland, had been appointed Deputy there during Strafford's absence. He was an intimate friend of Strafford's, and is said to have died of grief on hearing of Strafford's arrest.

173. *Radcliffe.* See IV. 2, 56. Radcliffe was appointed by Strafford guardian of his children.

183. *Balfour.* The Lieutenant of the Tower.

191. *Your Majesty may hear them now.* "A furious mob of upwards of 6,000 people, variously armed, thronged round Westminster Hall, clamoured for Strafford's blood, and placarded the names of those members of the Commons who . . . had voted against the attainder, as Straffordians, and betrayers of their country."—Forster's *Life of Pym*, 183.

211. *The dregs of violent death.* The cup must be drunk down to the very dregs.

213-214. *Be saved Through me.* Cf. II. 2, 99, 100.

218. *Too late for sermon at St. Antholin's.* Government had appropriated the Church of St. Antholin's to the use of the Scotch Commission. Alexander Henderson preached there to crowded audiences.

230. *Billingsley.* Balfour was desired by the King to receive Captain Billingsley and 100 men into the Tower, to effect Strafford's escape.

241. *To the utterance.* Fr. à outrance. Cf. :—

“Come, Fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance.”—*Macbeth*, III. 1, 72.

275. *I hunted by all means.* Cf. IV. 2, 175, &c.

280. *I do leave him now.* *Do* is here not emphatic; the stress is on *now*.

288-289. *David not More Jonathan.* 1 *Sam.* xviii. 1.

293. *I shall not live long.* Pym died Dec. 1643.

300. *And Eliot shall not blame us.* Notice the haunting presence of Eliot all through the play.

332. *Lapped.* Another form of *wrapped*. In *lap* the *w* has been lost.

351. *I shall die first.* Strafford feels that in the tragedy of his fate, there is the prologue to another tragedy, more terrible still.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT is meant by the *Action* of a Play? (The story, as told on the stage.) Is the incident of Pym's meeting Strafford at Greenwich part of the action? Is Strafford's falling on the Scots at Durham? (The first is not, because it is narrated as having occurred before the play begins; the second is, because it is part of the story, though not actually represented on the stage.)

2. It has been said of the drama that in it there should be a sudden change from happiness to misery, or from misery to happiness. Can you trace this suddenness in Strafford's fall?

3. What makes the *tragedy* in "Strafford?" Compare with what makes it in "Macbeth," and "King Lear."

4. How far do you think it may be allowable to alter (1) historical facts, (2) historical sequence, for dramatic purposes? Mention any instances you find of either in this play—in any play of Shakespere's.

5. Can you think of any reason why the actions of people in a political sphere should be judged by a different standard from that by which we judge those of people in private life? (Read Gervinus's "Shakespeare Commentaries," pp. 256-7.) Apply this to Strafford.

6. Can you see anything identical, or similar, in the leading motives of Strafford, Pym, and Lady Carlisle?

7. Compare Browning's blank verse with Shakespere's and with Milton's.

